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# The Economic Development of the South Union Shaker Colony 1807-1861

John M. Keith Jr.

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THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOUTH UNION  
SHAKER COLONY 1807-1861

by

John M. Keith, Jr..

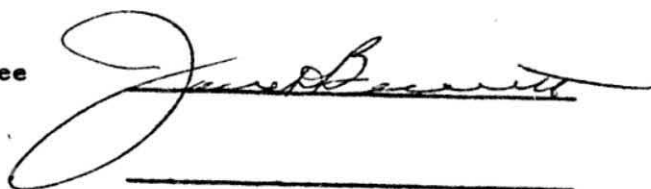
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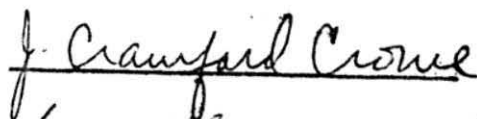
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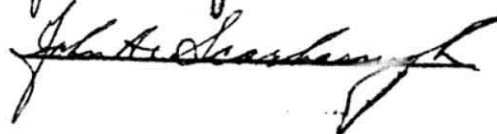
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Approved:

Graduate Committee

A large, stylized handwritten signature, likely "James Bennett", written in dark ink over a horizontal line.

A handwritten signature, "J. Crawford Crome", written in dark ink over a horizontal line.

A handwritten signature, "John H. Shasth", written in dark ink over a horizontal line.

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## FOREWORD

The United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, commonly called Shakers, are a most unique communistic group in American history. Their society had an economic as well as a religious base. Because of this entwining relationship, the Shakers outlived all other communistic societies in the United States.

From the beginning the Shakers placed great emphasis on the economic aspects of their communal society and this emphasis played a paramount role in many of their major decisions. In effect their theory was "Mine is thine and thine is mine." Taking their beliefs from this statement, together with the preaching of Mother Ann Lee, founder of the society, the Shakers evolved a communistic community that proved economically successful as long as they had sufficient membership to do the needed work. Indeed, industry was one of the first lessons taught to the Shaker.

One of the outstanding Shaker communities was located at South Union, in Logan County, Kentucky. This colony evolved from the Second Great Awakening which had its early beginnings in Kentucky. The notable economic progress made by the South Union Shakers prior to the Civil War will be the topic of this paper.



The author will inquire into several questions that are necessary for an understanding of the development and maturation of the South Union Shaker colony. The agricultural crops and livestock development will be investigated, the manufacturing and selling will be examined, and the improvements made on the Shaker property will be considered.

An understanding of the Shakers' economic base is important. By this economic stability the Shakers were able to outlive the other communal groups in America.

There are several hypotheses of this study. The Shakers produced many varieties of fruits and vegetables in an area in which there was little variation in agricultural products. Livestock played an important part in the economy of the South Union Shakers, and they made a sincere effort to improve the blood line of their stock. The Shakers produced many goods and services that were used by non-members, and the newest methods in marketing, advertising, and selling were employed. They made extensive improvements on their land and buildings.

This paper will begin on a very broad basis with a general history of the development of the Shaker Society and its general spiritual beliefs. From this point the writer will devote a chapter to the effects on economics resulting from their spiritual and temporal beliefs. Having established a basic understanding of the place of economics in a Shaker

community, the writer will investigate the case in point--South Union. There will follow a discussion of the South Union colony in three basic areas: crops and livestock, manufactured goods and selling, and internal improvements. The author will then make his conclusions.

The study will be confined to the period between the founding of the South Union colony in 1807 and the beginning of the Civil War in 1861. For the sake of clarity, it will be necessary on occasion to bring to the reader information from before and after this span of years.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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A special note of thanks goes to Mrs. Curry Hall of the Shaker Museum, Auburn, Kentucky, Brother Thomas Whittaker, O. S. B., librarian at St. Maurs Priory, South Union, Kentucky, and to Miss Julia Neal, who greatly aided the writer.

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## CHAPTER I

### Early History of the Shaker Movement

The beginning of the Shaker Church can be traced back to Vivarais, France during the reign of Louis XIV.<sup>1</sup> The Prophets, as the religious group was first called,<sup>2</sup> preached that the second coming of Christ was at hand. Because of their influence, revivals spread throughout Europe.<sup>3</sup> Most of the early adherents of this belief were French farmers who rolled, jumped, danced, and yelled during their religious ceremonies.<sup>4</sup> With the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, there was increased persecution of the group in France.<sup>5</sup> After England passed the Toleration Act,<sup>6</sup> some of the French Prophets or Camisards,<sup>7</sup> as they were then called, went to England, where

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<sup>1</sup>Aida Elam, History of the Shakers (Canterbury, New Hampshire: Canterbury Shakers). [The pages in this book are not numbered.]

<sup>2</sup>Alice Felt Tyler, Freedom's Ferment (New York, Evanston and London: Harper Torchbooks, 1944), p. 141.

<sup>3</sup>Elam, History of the Shakers.

<sup>4</sup>Louis K. Henderson, The Story of the Shakers: The Facts about the Most Fantastic Church in America (Haldeman-Julius Publications: Girard, Kansas, 1945), p. 3. [Henderson also states that this group engaged in sex orgies and ritualistic nudism but there does not seem to be proof of this.]

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.; Tyler, Freedom's Ferment, pp. 141-42.

<sup>6</sup>G. M. Trevelyan, History of England (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1952), II, p. 149.

<sup>7</sup>Elam, History of the Shakers.

they felt they would be allowed more religious latitude.<sup>8</sup> Propheying that the world was soon to come to an end, the Camisards quickly gained many English converts; however, when their prophecy was not fulfilled, the sect all but disappeared.<sup>9</sup>

The Camisards, who were actually a radical sect of Calvinists, took their preaching to the working classes.<sup>10</sup> In Manchester, England, two Quakers, Jane and Jim Wardley, joined this group, taking with them much of the Quaker doctrine.<sup>11</sup> In 1747 the Wardleys became the leading exponents of this religious group and began holding public meetings.<sup>12</sup> The Wardleys and their followers said that Christ would come to the earth again, but this time Christ would be in the person of a woman.<sup>13</sup> They believed that God had made male and female in the animal kingdom; therefore, He intended two Christs--one male and one female.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Marguerite Frost, The Shaker Story (Canterbury, New Hampshire: Canterbury Shakers). [The pages in this book are not numbered.]

<sup>9</sup>Elam, History of the Shakers.

<sup>10</sup>Edward D. Andrews, The People Called Shakers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 5.

<sup>11</sup>Henderson, The Story of the Shakers, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup>Elam, History of the Shakers.

<sup>13</sup>Clara Endicott Sears, Gleanings From Old Shaker Journals (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1916), p. 8.

<sup>14</sup>Julia Neal, By Their Fruits: The Story of Shakerism at South Union, Kentucky (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947), p. 4.

The young group under the Wardleys allowed their religious feelings to be expressed by great shaking, singing, and dancing.<sup>15</sup> Through these actions they came to be known as the "Shaking Quakers."<sup>16</sup>

Among the first converts coming to the Wardleys was a family named Lee. John Lee, the father, brought with him several of his children, among them a daughter, Ann. Tradition has it that Ann was born February 29, 1736.<sup>17</sup> As one of eight children she had to work to help support her family. Ann never had the opportunity to attend school; thus she did not learn to read or write.<sup>18</sup> She started to work at the age of six in a hat factory and cotton mill, and later she worked as a cook at a Manchester infirmary.<sup>19</sup> From her sordid and impoverished surroundings, Ann Lee as a child developed "a horror of marriage and a conviction of the uncleanness and depravity of sexual intercourse."<sup>20</sup> According to Shaker historians, Ann disliked the idea of sex so much that she tried to talk her

<sup>15</sup>Tyler, Freedom's Ferment, p. 142; Elam, History of the Shakers.

<sup>16</sup>Charles Nordhoff, The Communitistic Societies of the United States (New York: Hillary House Publishers, Ltd., 1961), p. 119.

<sup>17</sup>Andrews, The People Called Shakers, p. 5.

<sup>18</sup>Tyler, Freedom's Ferment, p. 141.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., Everett Webber, Escape to Utopia: The Communal Movement in America (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1959), p. 42.

<sup>20</sup>Webber, Escape to Utopia, p. 42.

mother out of having sexual relations with her father, only to be whipped by her father.<sup>21</sup> Ann's mother, realizing her daughter's feelings, promised her that she would never have to marry.<sup>22</sup> But Ann was left motherless at an early age.<sup>23</sup>

After her mother's death, Ann's father forced her to marry. Ann was wed to Abraham Stanley, a blacksmith, on January 5, 1762.<sup>24</sup> Ann's father forced her into this marriage, knowing that she did not want to marry and found it repugnant.<sup>25</sup> Ann did not really desire the marriage,<sup>26</sup> and her married life was difficult.<sup>27</sup> She had four children, three of whom died in infancy, and one who died at six.<sup>28</sup>

When Ann was twenty-three she was converted, along with members of her family, to Shakerism by Jane and Jim Wardley.<sup>29</sup> Ann began to feel that it was morally wrong to have sexual relations with her husband. At night she would wander around

<sup>21</sup>Henderson, The Story of the Shakers, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup>Webber, Escape to Utopia, p. 42.

<sup>23</sup>Sears, Gleanings From Old Shaker Journals, p. 9.

<sup>24</sup>Elam, History of the Shakers.

<sup>25</sup>Nordhoff, The Communitic Societies of the United States, p. 125.

<sup>26</sup>Edwards, The People Called Shakers, p. 7.

<sup>27</sup>Tyler, Freedom's Ferment, p. 141.

<sup>28</sup>Frost, The Shaker Story.

<sup>29</sup>Summary View of the Millennial Church (Albany, New York: C. Van Bentheysen, 1848), p. 13.



the house in anguish; she would scream, moan, and wring her hands until blood appeared.<sup>30</sup> After Ann recovered from her anguish, she felt that she had a special task and threw herself into her mission with the Wardleys. She felt that she had undergone a monumental struggle and had won.<sup>31</sup>

Ann and the other members of the society came under severe harassment by the government, Church, and mobs. At one time Ann, along with her father and three other people, was arrested for "profaning the Sabbath."<sup>32</sup> On another occasion Ann was being beaten by a mob when a nobleman arrived and saved her. He said he had been at his home when a strong compulsion came over him to go to a certain place. Arriving at the place, he found the mob beating Ann.<sup>33</sup>

During her association with the society, Ann was brought before four local members of the ministry to determine whether she should be branded and have her tongue bored with a hot iron for heresy. It was reported that the spirit of God came over Ann and she spoke to the men in seventy-two different languages. She so impressed them with her knowledge that she was asked by them to teach these languages.<sup>34</sup> The examining

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Andrews, The People Called Shakers, p. 8.

<sup>32</sup>Tyler, Freedom's Ferment, p. 142.

<sup>33</sup>Henderson, The Story of the Shakers, p. 5.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.; Andrews, The People Called Shakers, pp. 10-11.

ministers felt that Ann was truly inspired by God, so they would not have her branded. The mob outside was so angered by this decision that they took Ann and those of her followers that were with her to a secluded place and tried to stone them to death. Miraculously, only one of the party was hit,<sup>35</sup> a man who was thought to be a weak believer.<sup>36</sup>

Once a brother of Ann's who was not a believer found her sitting in a chair singing praises to God. Taking a staff about the size of a broom handle, he beat her face until the stick was splintered. He then left to get a glass of ale and later returned to beat her with the other end of the stick until it was splintered. Ann said she felt the hand of God protecting her through all of this.<sup>37</sup>

The year 1770 was the turning point in Ann's life. In this year she spent fourteen days in jail for a reason unknown to Ann and her followers. It was the desire of the government to starve Ann to death by not feeding her for two weeks.<sup>38</sup> Her cell was so cramped that she could neither stand up nor lie down. After remaining in the prison for two days, Ann was aided by one of her disciples, James Whittaker, who fed her a mixture of milk and wine through a pipe stem each night for the

<sup>35</sup>Henderson, The Story of the Shakers, p. 5.

<sup>36</sup>Summary View of the Millennial Church, pp. 17-18.

<sup>37</sup>Webber, Escape to Utopia, p. 44.

<sup>38</sup>Sears, Gleanings From Old Shaker Journals, p. 13.

remaining twelve days.<sup>39</sup>

While Ann was in prison, she felt that she was Christ in His second appearing. She believed she had been established in this position by dissolving her selfish family relationship with her husband and by forming a relationship of brotherhood and sisterhood that could be ideally and practically manifested in a life of celibacy.<sup>40</sup> She believed herself to be the chosen one of God<sup>41</sup> who had a special duty of establishing the "True Church."<sup>42</sup> Whenever she spoke, it was to be Christ speaking through her.<sup>43</sup> Ann stated that a vision of the Garden of Eden came to her from God, and it showed her the first act of human transgression, the plucking of the forbidden fruit of pleasure from their bodies, bringing about man's fall. Thus came the consequent answer to the question of what man

<sup>39</sup>Tyler, Freedom's Ferment, p. 143; Elam, History of the Shakers; Henderson, The Story of the Shakers, p. 6. /Henderson spells the name of Whittaker with one "t." This spelling seems to be wrong. / Andrews states that the prison incident is an exaggeration of what happened. He states that people were not starved to death for breaking the Sabbath or other such actions and that the key hole on the second floor cell where Ann was supposed to have been was not accessible from the street. On the basis of the weight of evidence it would seem that Andrews' statement is not correct. See Andrews, The People Called Shakers, p. 11.

<sup>40</sup>Elam, History of the Shakers.

<sup>41</sup>Nordhoff, The Communistic Societies of the United States, p. 119.

<sup>42</sup>Webber, Escape to Utopia, p. 43.

<sup>43</sup>Andrews, The People Called Shakers, p. 11.

must do to be saved.<sup>44</sup>

When she was released from prison Ann became the leader of the society.<sup>45</sup> Her doctrine was that confession was the door to the regenerate life, and celibacy was the rule and the cross.<sup>46</sup> After Ann's sufferings in prison, the Shakers began to take new converts with their condemnation of lust and denunciation of worldliness.<sup>47</sup> With the influx of these converts, Ann began to expand and elaborate her beliefs. A good Shaker must not only be chaste but must also denounce all worldliness. All-night meetings were often held, and the people nearby began to talk of fanaticism and heresy.<sup>48</sup>

Shortly after Ann took over the leadership of the society the Wardleys withdrew. It was said that they did not agree with some of Ann's radical ideas on marriage and lust.<sup>49</sup> The Wardleys spent their last days in an alms house and died on an unknown date.<sup>50</sup>

In 1771 Ann ". . . was by a direct revelation instructed

<sup>44</sup>Summary View of the Millennial Church, p. 15.

<sup>45</sup>Andrews, The People Called Shakers, p. 11.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

to repair to America."<sup>51</sup> The Shakers felt that the call to America was a divine call,<sup>52</sup> and in the summer of 1774 Ann with eight of her followers, including her husband, her brother, and a niece, sailed for America.<sup>53</sup> The ship called Mariah on which the little group traveled was said to be condemned.<sup>54</sup> When Ann and her disciples boarded the ship, she began to speak against the worldliness of the crew, making the captain angry.<sup>55</sup> The Shakers further provoked the captain by holding services on deck. He threatened the Shakers that if they did this again they would be thrown overboard. Shortly, the Shakers held another service, and the captain gave the order to heave them overboard. A large storm came up and a gigantic wave hit the ship, pushing loose some of the boards. The ship began to take water and appeared about to sink. Suddenly Ann said that she saw a vision of two angels on the mast and knew that all was going to be well and not a "hair of their heads would be hurt."

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<sup>51</sup>Nordhoff, The Communistic Societies of the United States, p. 125. [Webber, Escape to Utopia, p. 44, states that Ann had this revelation to go to America to establish the "True Church" in 1774.]

<sup>52</sup>Andrews, The People Called Shakers, p. 13.

<sup>53</sup>Tyler, Freedom's Ferment, p. 143. [Andrews, The People Called Shakers, p. 13, states that Ann's father did not go because Ann's mother was not a believer and he did not want to leave an established profession. Most authorities state that Ann's mother had died many years before this.]

<sup>54</sup>Frost, The Shaker Story.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

As she said this, a large wave hit the ship, replacing the loose boards, and all were saved. From then on the captain allowed the Shakers to sing and dance as often as they liked.<sup>56</sup>

The Shakers landed in New York on August 6, 1774.<sup>57</sup> Upon arriving there, the little group left the boat and walked down the streets. Suddenly Mother Ann, as she was now called, turned to a couple sitting in front of their house and called them by name.<sup>58</sup> She told the astonished couple that she had come from England to organize the "True Church" and that she wanted to use their house. Although the Cunninghams, who were the owners of the house, were quite mystified, they did allow Ann to stay with them.<sup>59</sup> John Hocknell, William Lee, and James Whittaker heard there was land for sale near Albany at a town called Niskeyuna.<sup>60</sup> The trio went up the Hudson River to investigate the possibilities of land suitable for their needs.<sup>61</sup>

Several months after arriving in America, Abraham Stanley became seriously ill, requiring Ann's constant care.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Summary View of the Millennial Church, p. 20; Webber, Escape to Utopia, p. 45; Henderson, The Story of the Shakers, p. 7; Elam, History of the Shakers. /Sears, Gleanings From Old Shaker Journals, p. 17, states that the men on the ship fixed the loose planks shortly after Ann had her vision.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>57</sup>Henderson, The Story of the Shakers, p. 7.

<sup>58</sup>Elam, History of the Shakers.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Andrews, The People Called Shakers, p. 15.

<sup>61</sup>Tyler, Freedom's Ferment, p. 143.

<sup>62</sup>Elam, History of the Shakers.

Through the long months of his illness Ann and her husband grew steadily poorer and poorer. When Abraham finally regained his strength, he asked Ann to lead a normal married life, but she refused to return to a "private selfish relation."<sup>63</sup> Abraham deserted Ann for another woman, leaving his wife in complete poverty.<sup>64</sup> She stayed in this condition for four months until she joined the rest of the group at Niskeyuna in 1776.<sup>65</sup>

After the Shakers had settled and cleared their land, they became disturbed because they had not received new converts. Ann assured them that God would see that they accomplished their mission.<sup>66</sup>

The Shakers first attracted the attention of their neighbors near Niskeyuna by their noisy services and refusal to give military service.<sup>67</sup> The Shakers were considered at first as rather amusing but later they were considered a nuisance as they seemed to have a "holier than thou" attitude toward many of their neighbors.<sup>68</sup>

Mother Ann wanted to prepare for a great influx of people

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Andrews, The People Called Shakers, p. 16.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 17; Elam, History of the Shakers.

<sup>67</sup>Webber, Escape to Utopia, p. 49.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., p. 43.



in the near future. This was encouraging to the Shakers, who had not had a convert in the five years they had been in America.<sup>69</sup> In 1779 a religious revival occurred in New Lebanon, New York, and spread to other towns near by.<sup>70</sup> The reasons for the revival are rather confused. Some writers say one reason for the revival was the feeling that the Revolutionary War meant the coming of the millennium.<sup>71</sup> Some historians state that the revival erupted because of a fight between the New Light Baptists and the Old Light Baptists,<sup>72</sup> while others say there was a fight between the New Light Congregationalists and the Old Light Congregationalists.<sup>73</sup>

Regardless of the reason for the religious upheaval, it played a tremendous part in the development of the Shaker movement. Many people went to these revival meetings and left with their religious desires unsatisfied. Some of these unsatisfied people heard of the Shakers and came to see them.<sup>74</sup> As the New Lebanon revival came to a close many more came to the Shaker colony, and of these many were converted.<sup>75</sup> One of

<sup>69</sup>Henderson, The Story of the Shakers, p. 7.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.; Frost, The Shaker Story.

<sup>71</sup>Webber, Escape to Utopia, pp. 46-47.

<sup>72</sup>Tyler, Freedom's Ferment, p. 143.

<sup>73</sup>Andrews, The People Called Shakers, p. 18.

<sup>74</sup>Nordhoff, The Communitistic Societies of the United States, p. 126.

<sup>75</sup>Henderson, The Story of the Shakers, p. 8.



the early converts was Joseph Meacham, a Baptist minister.<sup>76</sup> Meacham would eventually play an important role in the development of Shakerism.

Mother Ann and her followers were arrested only one time in America. Their arrest was because the Shakers were thought to be of Tory sentiments during the American Revolution.<sup>77</sup> Three followers of Ann's showed dissatisfaction with the American cause, and this aroused antagonism against Ann.<sup>78</sup> This, along with complaints of their neighbors, brought the Shakers under suspicion.<sup>79</sup> Ann and several of her followers were brought before the commissioners at Albany and told to take an oath of allegiance to the colonial cause. The little group refused to swear because this was against their religion; therefore, they were sent to prison.<sup>80</sup> The colonial government offered to trade Ann for a captured British spy, but the British refused, since they knew nothing of Ann Lee.<sup>81</sup> The Shakers were released a few months later. The once obscure

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<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Tyler, Freedom's Ferment, p. 144.

<sup>78</sup>Andrews, The People Called Shakers, p. 33.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Seams, Gleanings From Old Shaker Journals, p. 22. Henderson, The Story of the Shakers, p. 9, states that the Shakers were tried and convicted of treason and sent to prison, but there does not seem to be evidence to support this statement.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>81</sup>Webber, Escape to Utopia, pp. 49-50.

little group had now become well-known.<sup>82</sup>

Shortly after Ann returned home from prison she decided to go on a preaching tour of New England.<sup>83</sup> Ann decided to make Harvard, Massachusetts, her headquarters. The selection of this town was a very wise choice. Harvard had been the former home of Shadrack Ireland, a New Light preacher, who had preached perfection, celibacy, and millennialism. Celibacy, Shadrack Ireland believed, was only to last until perfection had been attained.<sup>84</sup> Before Mother Ann could get to Harvard, she encountered opposition at the home of David Meacham, brother of Joseph Meacham. As Ann was holding a service, she was warned by a mob to discontinue her meeting, which she did.<sup>85</sup> After arriving at Harvard and winning several converts, Ann began to go to nearby communities to preach.<sup>86</sup> Eventually, she and her followers visited thirty-six different communities in New England, and Ann revisited some of them several times.<sup>87</sup>

On the New England tour the Shakers met with great hostility. At Hancock, Massachusetts, a former disgruntled Shaker, Valentine Rathburn, published a pamphlet against them. He

<sup>82</sup> Andrews, The People Called Shakers, p. 34.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>87</sup> Frost, The Shaker Story.

then followed them to the nearby town of Richmond, and here they were taken to the local magistrate and fined twenty dollars for blasphemy. The Shakers were warned to leave the state, which they did not do. However nothing came of the threats.<sup>88</sup> On one occasion while the Shakers were holding a meeting in August, 1781, a mob gathered at the meeting house and ordered the Shakers to leave town because it was reported that the Shakers had brought "seventy wagons and 600 stands of arms" to help the British.<sup>89</sup> When the Shakers would not leave town, they were driven out with whips and cudgels.<sup>90</sup>

Even with great harassment the Shakers took many converts. One outstanding convert was James Jewett. Jewett of Enfield, New Hampshire, in turn converted his close friend, John Cotton of Alfred, Maine. Cotton then returned to Maine and immediately visited the home of John and Sarah Barnes to tell them the "good news of great joy."<sup>91</sup> His conversion of this couple marked the beginning of a Shaker colony in Maine.<sup>92</sup>

Ann returned from her New England tour in late 1783. On the New England trip Ann and her followers started colonies in Maine, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Massachu-

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<sup>88</sup>Henderson, The Story of the Shakers, pp. 12-13.

<sup>89</sup>Andrews, The People Called Shakers, pp. 40-41.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., pp. 38-39.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

setts.<sup>93</sup> Upon her return Ann had a vision that in the Southwest God would do great things.<sup>94</sup> However, Ann was never to see this great movement. In July 1784, her brother, William Lee, died and on September 8, 1784, the past years of energy, emotion, privation, and persecution took their toll on the poor mill girl with her death at Niskeyuna.<sup>95</sup>

Ann had selected James Whittaker, one of the original eight from England, as her successor.<sup>96</sup> He felt that cohesiveness was needed to strengthen the group; therefore, he took it upon himself to bring the scattered communities into a closer working relationship.<sup>97</sup> With the death of "Father James Whittaker" in 1786, Joseph Meacham, the first non-English head of the society, became the leader of the Shaker group.<sup>98</sup> Meacham along with Lucy Wright, the leading Eldress, continued the consolidation of the movement with the formation of the central Family<sup>99</sup> at Mt. Lebanon, New

<sup>93</sup>Tyler, Freedom's Ferment, p. 144.

<sup>94</sup>Webber, Escape to Utopia, pp. 53-54.

<sup>95</sup>Andrews, The People Called Shakers, p. 49; Webber, Escape to Utopia, p. 54; Nordhoff, The Communitic Societies of the United States, p. 128. /Niskeyuna is often spoken of as Watervliet./

<sup>96</sup>Tyler, Freedom's Ferment, p. 144.

<sup>97</sup>Henderson, The Story of the Shakers, p. 15.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>99</sup>The "Family" was the basic unit of the Shaker society. In each colony there were from two to eight Families and each Family held usually from twenty to one hundred members. It

York.<sup>100</sup> Meacham considered the establishment of a centralized society the fulfillment of the 72nd Psalm:<sup>101</sup>

There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit therefore shall be like Lebanon; and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.

In the early 1800's word began to reach the Shakers that a revival was in progress in southern Kentucky. This seemed to be the culmination of a vision Mother Ann had seen a quarter of a century earlier. She said that the next place for expansion of the Shaker movement would be in the Southwest.<sup>102</sup> Reports continued to reach them that during the revivals men were falling down and barking, swooning, and were given to great fits of jerking.<sup>103</sup> The Shakers realized that it was with a revival in New York that they made their greatest advancement during the revival of 1779. Thus they began to make immediate preparations to send missionaries into the area.<sup>104</sup>

On January 1, 1805, John Meacham, Benjamin Youngs, and

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tried to be and to a great extent was self-sufficient and was independent from the other Families in the colony. The Families were drawn together only by the ministry of each colony which presided over spiritual matters and the trustees of the colony who presided over the temporal matters of each community.

<sup>100</sup>Henderson, The Story of the Shakers, p. 16.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>102</sup>Webber, Escape to Utopia, p. 54.

<sup>103</sup>Nordhoff, The Communistic Societies of the United States, p. 131.

<sup>104</sup>Tyler, Freedom's Ferment, p. 45; Andrews, The People Called Shakers, p. 72.

Issachar Bates left Mt. Lebanon, New York, setting out for the Southwest "to give the word to those that were ready to receive it."<sup>105</sup> The Shaker missionaries traveled through New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Tennessee, and finally into Kentucky.<sup>106</sup> The first religious contact with the West was made on March 3, 1805, at the home of Reverend Matthew Houston at Paint Lick in Garrard County, Kentucky.<sup>107</sup> Four days after this, the Shakers opened their campaign in the West when Houston allowed the Shakers to speak to his Presbyterian congregation.<sup>108</sup> After having their gospel received at Paint Lick, the Shaker trio went to Turtle Creek, Ohio (northeast of Cincinnati). Reaching this small village on March 27, the three men went to the house of Malcolm Worley and stayed there for several days.<sup>109</sup> The little group had traveled 1233 miles in two months and twenty-seven days.<sup>110</sup> Worley's minister, a New Light Presbyterian named Richard McNemar, invited the Shakers to speak at his church.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>105</sup>Nordhoff, The Communistic Societies of the United States, p. 131.

<sup>106</sup>Andrews, The People Called Shakers, pp. 72-73.

<sup>107</sup>Neal, By Their Fruits, p. 21.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., pp. 21-22.

<sup>110</sup>Henderson, The Story of the Shakers, p. 18.

<sup>111</sup>Neal, By Their Fruits, p. 22; Andrews, The People Called Shakers, p. 75.

Worley became the first convert on the frontier, and on April 24, 1805, McNemar followed in Worley's steps.<sup>112</sup> Other converts were taken, and on May 23, the first society meeting was held in the West with the three brothers leading the service.<sup>113</sup> Worley's cabin became the nucleus for the future settlement of Union Village, and it later gave the geographical relationship to several of the new colonies<sup>114</sup>--North Union near Cleveland, Ohio, West Union near Busro, Indiana, and South Union near Auburn, Kentucky.

After establishing their first colony in the West, the three Shakers returned to Kentucky to visit several of the revival areas. While they were on this mission, they were harassed by scoffers, who treated them with ill will.<sup>115</sup> Reverend Barton Stone, a Baptist minister, became an arch enemy of the Shakers. He accused them of trying to break up homes in order to obtain people's lands.<sup>116</sup> Stone and other anti-Shaker revivalists became increasingly angered and distressed by the tremendous amount of interest that was shown this new

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<sup>112</sup>Neal, By Their Fruits, pp. 22-23.

<sup>113</sup>Andrews, The People Called Shakers, p. 76.

<sup>114</sup>Neal, By Their Fruits, p. 23.

<sup>115</sup>Henderson, The Story of the Shakers, p. 18; Neal, By Their Fruits, p. 24. /Andrews, The People Called Shakers, p. 74, states that on several occasions the Shakers were treated with overwhelming kindness./

<sup>116</sup>Neal, By Their Fruits, p. 24.



revival group.<sup>117</sup> The Baptists presented the most concerted effort to harass the Shakers from the frontier.<sup>118</sup>

In July, 1805, three new workers arrived in Kentucky from New Lebanon to help with the crusade.<sup>119</sup> By the spring of 1806, the Shaker crowds had begun to grow larger than ever before. In May, Benjamin Seth Youngs spoke to an assemblage of six hundred to eight hundred at Matthew Houston's.<sup>120</sup> A few weeks later a meeting at the barn of Elisha Thomas attracted four hundred visitors. Thomas' land at Shawnee Run was the eventual site of the Pleasant Hill colony. At a later meeting in Sam Bonta's barn the confession of the first Negro convert was heard by the thousand visitors present.<sup>121</sup> In 1807 Bates, McNemar, and Houston went on a revival trip to southwestern Kentucky in the Gasper River area.<sup>122</sup> On this trip twenty-three people were converted.<sup>123</sup> John Rankin, a local farmer, acted as the host to the Shakers on their trip and soon joined the group that was to become known first as

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<sup>117</sup>Tyler, Freedom's Ferment, p. 45; Nordhoff, The Communistic Societies of the United States, p. 132.

<sup>118</sup>Neal, By Their Fruits, p. 26.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>123</sup>Andrews, The People Called Shakers, p. 80.



Gasper or Jasper Valley.<sup>124</sup> Along with Jess McComb, a local land owner, Rankin gave his farm to the society.<sup>125</sup> Buildings were erected in 1810 and the following year two elders and two eldresses were appointed.<sup>126</sup>

The South Union colony as it was called later was thus born out of the spirit of the time. Eventually, there would be seven Western colonies: four in Ohio, two in Kentucky, and one in Indiana. These colonies came into being directly or indirectly through the actions of Bates, Youngs, and Meacham, who so impressed the frontiersmen with their sincerity, manner and dress that the beliefs they preached prevailed in spite of many obstacles.

To be sure, the establishment of the South Union colony did not end the harassment of the little group, for they were still subjected to opposition.<sup>127</sup> However, the Shakers survived their ordeals, and by 1820 they were a thriving community. They continued to progress under the able leadership of Benjamin Youngs, who served as first elder for several years.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>124</sup>Neal, By Their Fruits, p. 36.

<sup>125</sup>Andrews, The People Called Shakers, p. 83.

<sup>126</sup>Henderson, The Story of the Shakers, pp. 145-46.

<sup>127</sup>Neal, By Their Fruits, p. 37. [Neal points out an incident in 1810 in which the entire fall crop was burned while in the barn by men opposed to the Shakers' religious beliefs. The Shakers traveling in a strange country were often given wrong directions or their horses' ears and tails were cut off.]<sup>7</sup>

<sup>128</sup>Andrews, The People Called Shakers, pp. 83-84.

Like most of the Shaker settlements, South Union continued to grow until near the middle of the nineteenth century, when a general decline was evidenced. South Union once owned six thousand acres of the best farm land in southern Kentucky.<sup>129</sup> Because of its failure to attract new converts, the Shaker community steadily declined. Hired hands were employed to hold up the vast economic base, but the end was inevitable. In 1922 the South Union community was dissolved and sold.<sup>130</sup>

With the disbanding of South Union the last of the Western colonies went out of existence. The nine members living there when it was sold were given two choices: they could take \$10,000 or they could go to the parent colony at New Lebanon, New York. Of the nine remaining Shakers, only two chose to go to New Lebanon; five of the Believers remained in Auburn,<sup>131</sup> and two went to Louisville to live. Thus ended the 115 year old settlement of South Union.

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<sup>129</sup>Nordhoff, The Communistic Societies of the United States, p. 207.

<sup>130</sup>Neal, By Their Fruits, p. 266.

<sup>131</sup>Of the five that chose to stay in Auburn, one couple was married.

## CHAPTER II

### The Economic Philosophy of the Shakers

For the Shaker there were seven moral principles to be practiced. These were duty to God, duty to man, separation from the world, practical peace, simplicity of language, right use of property, and a virgin life.<sup>1</sup> From these moral principles the Shaker drew the pattern of his moral life. It should be understood, however, that when the Shaker trustee was in a business transaction, he was not a dreamer or a mystic; he was a practical businessman.<sup>2</sup>

The Shakers felt that there was a great spiritual value to be gained from hard work.<sup>3</sup> The basis for the great stress on work was that Jesus had worked with His hands as had His Apostles.<sup>4</sup> Work was thus made an act of religion and so became an act of piety.<sup>5</sup> They felt that "labor is worship and

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<sup>1</sup>Summary View of the Millennial Church (Albany: C. van Benthuyssen, 1848), pp. 307-33.

<sup>2</sup>Anna White and Lelia Taylor, Shakerism, Its Meaning and Message (Columbus, Ohio: Fred Heer Press, 1904), p. 310.

<sup>3</sup>Edward Andrews, Community Industries of the Shakers (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1933), p. 77.

<sup>4</sup>The Shaker (Albany Co., N.Y.), July, 1871, Vol. 55.

<sup>5</sup>Clara Sears, Gleanings from Old Shaker Journals (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1916), p. 222.

prayer."<sup>6</sup> Mother Ann stated that the believers should "Be faithful to keep the gospel; be neat and industrious. Put your hands to work and your hearts to God."<sup>7</sup> She went on to say, "Do all your work as if you had a thousand years to live and as if you knew you must die tomorrow."<sup>8</sup>

It can thus be seen that, from a spiritual point of view, work played an integral part in the Shaker religion. However, there were other reasons why the Shakers felt that they should work diligently. In a vision a Shaker eldress gave to young people these words that had been given to her:

Idleness is the sure road to destruction and misery; and souls that walk therein will find an inexpressibly great work to do before they enter the bright kingdom of peace and rest in the world to come.<sup>9</sup>

They realized that they must be self-sustaining, separating themselves from an imperfectly constituted and often hostile society.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps the most important reasons for their advanced economic development were to finance the construction of new buildings, to expand the membership

<sup>6</sup>White and Taylor, Shakerism, p. 305.

<sup>7</sup>Marguerite F. Melcher, The Shaker Adventure (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), p. 101.

<sup>8</sup>Charles Nordhoff, The Communistic Societies of the United States (New York: Hillary House Ltd., 1961), p. 129.

<sup>9</sup>Youth's Guide in Zion and a Holy Mother's Promises (Canterbury, N.H.: np, 1842), p. 15.

<sup>10</sup>Mary Webb Gibson, Shakerism in Kentucky (Cynthiana, Kentucky: Hobson Press, 1942), p. 93; Andrews, Community Industries, pp. 26-27.

of the society, and to increase the inheritance.<sup>11</sup> The Shakers often spoke of money as the "one thing needful."<sup>12</sup> In spite of this realization of the necessity for money, their profits were small and credit balances were usually low,<sup>13</sup> as their moral code would not allow excessive charges.<sup>14</sup>

It now has been shown that there was a need for efficient economic structure in the community. This is seen on the basis of Shaker tenets that work was a moral and spiritual action and that only by efficient production and excellent quality could they compete economically with the "outside world."

The actual economic structure of the Shaker community varied on occasion. The system changed with the passage of time and with events which caused the alteration of the existing structure. An example of this might be the moving of the West Family at South Union and the absorption of this Family into the other South Union Families of the community after the burning of their large dwelling house. Another example of this was when West Union was dissolved.

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<sup>11</sup>Sears, Gleanings from Old Shaker Journals, p. 305; Andrews, Community Industries, pp. 26-27.

<sup>12</sup>Julia Neal, By Their Fruits, The Story of Shakerism at South Union, Kentucky (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947), p. 101.

<sup>13</sup>Andrews, Community Industries, p. 28.

<sup>14</sup>Alice Felt Tyler, Freedom's Ferment (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1944), p. 164.

The Shaker journalist states:<sup>15</sup>

Today the Society of Believers at West Union or Busro broke up the 2nd time now by the council and advice of the leaders East and West. They all chose their own home in any society in the Western Country. Our teams are there and we learn that 27 of them have decided to make South Union their future home and are coming with our teams which left there on the 10th instant and shall expect them in 3 or 4 days.

The leadership of the South Union colony was the ministry.<sup>16</sup> This was usually made up of two men and two women. It was their duty to lead spiritually the Families of the colonies, to help coordinate temporal activities, and to make rules and regulations concerning the colony.<sup>17</sup> Below the ministry were the Trustees or Office Deacons. There were usually two men and two women in this office. It was their duty to oversee all property, gifts, grants, and donations that belonged or were given to the community.<sup>18</sup> The spiritual heads of each Family were an Elder and Eldress.<sup>19</sup> The number in each Family was to correspond with the ministry.<sup>20</sup> It was their duty "to counsel, encourage, admonish, exhort and reprove, as occasion might require;--

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<sup>15</sup>Record A (1804-October 1836) kept by the Ministry. Copied by H. L. Eads, p. 399.

<sup>16</sup>The Constitution and Covenant of the Church at South Union Gasper Valley, Kentucky, 1830, Article 1, Section 4.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., Article 1, Section 5.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., Article 3, Section 1.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., Article 4, Section 1.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

to lead the worship. . ."<sup>21</sup> The temporal affairs of the Family were entrusted to Family Deacons and Deaconesses.<sup>22</sup> They were responsible for the domestic needs of their Family and directed the several occupations of their respective Families.<sup>23</sup>

As previously stated, the Family tried to be largely self-sufficient. One Family in a community, however, often loaned another Family money or helped another harvest crops.

The place of the individual in the economic system was very important. There was no place in the Shaker community for the lazy or idle.<sup>24</sup> Most of the rank and file members were industrious, obedient, and devoted.<sup>25</sup> In the Shaker community the individual worked for the good of all<sup>26</sup> and he had a job at all times during the year.<sup>27</sup> Oftentimes the highest officer was given the most menial of tasks. Labor was appointed according to the strength of the individual, with those members of the community capable of the trust and re-

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., Article 4, Section 2.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., Article 5, Section 1.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., Article 5, Section 2.

<sup>24</sup>Sears, Gleanings From Old Shaker Journals, p. 223; Andrews, Community Industries, p. 27.

<sup>25</sup>Tyler, Freedom's Ferment, pp. 163-64.

<sup>26</sup>Gibson, Shakerism in Kentucky, p. 92.

<sup>27</sup>"The Shakers," Harpers New Monthly Magazine, Vol. V, No. 86 (July, 1857), p. 93.

sponsibility having the greatest share of the work.<sup>28</sup> It was often said that a motto of a leader was "I am among you as one who serveth."<sup>29</sup> Everyone has a task, and he was expected to put his heart into it.<sup>30</sup> Even the older members of the societies worked at such things as setting out shade trees which they would never enjoy, but which they knew other generations would.<sup>31</sup>

It was felt that for every commune to prosper it must be founded as far as industry went on agriculture. The Shakers felt that the simple manner and labor of a farming people could hold the community together.<sup>32</sup> The Shakers had practiced from their inception diversified agriculture, intensive farming, and division of labor.<sup>33</sup> To the Shaker there were two divisions of industry: those supplying the needs of the society and those undertaken with an eye on the needs of the "outside world."<sup>34</sup> It should be understood that no products were produced for commercial markets that could not also be used by the Shakers.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>28</sup>White and Taylor, Shakerism, p. 306; Andrews, Community Industries, p. 28.

<sup>29</sup>White and Taylor, Shakerism, p. 306.

<sup>30</sup>Sears, Gleanings From Old Shaker Journals, p. 223.

<sup>31</sup>White and Taylor, Shakerism, p. 306.

<sup>32</sup>Nordhoff, The Communistic Societies of the United States, p. 161; Tyler, Freedom's Ferment, p. 161.

<sup>33</sup>Tyler, Freedom's Ferment, p. 161.

<sup>34</sup>Andrews, Community Industries, p. 27.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. 27-28.



The tannery, for example, sold many tanned goods to the "outside world," but it also used tanned goods for book binding and hat bands for the Shakers. Different communities specialized in special things.<sup>36</sup> New Lebanon, New York, specialized in cabinet work and chairs. South Union, Kentucky, specialized in seeds and preserves.

The Shakers felt that the best way to learn a trade was from a man who was an expert. This was the case of Charles Davis of Nashville, Tennessee. Davis was paid \$10.00 per week and traveling expenses for "learning Brother Harvey to bind books."<sup>37</sup> This was again the case when the Shakers brought in a hatter to teach a brother how to make hats.<sup>38</sup> Sometimes a Shaker would go to another Shaker village to learn a trade, and trustees often asked the advice of trustees in other colonies.<sup>39</sup> With examples such as the above, it can easily be seen why the good business management of the South Union Shakers allowed them to survive the Panic of 1837 with few problems.

The Shakers were continually trying to improve their agricultural and industrial goods. This was done through their wise business management and investments. In 1839 the South Union colony paid \$1,000, a then unheard of price, for a fine

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<sup>36</sup>Tyler, Freedom's Ferment, p. 163.

<sup>37</sup>Neal, By Their Fruits, p. 102.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Letter from Andrews Collection. See Appendix A.

Durham bull to enhance their breeding stock.<sup>40</sup> In 1836 the New Lebanon colony gave South Union three Bakewell sheep and South Union colony gave them three pigs.<sup>41</sup> The high quality of Shaker goods produced such a demand that the entire Southeastern United States had Shaker products made available to them.

The tremendous success of the Shakers' economic undertakings was due in large measure to the drive and motivation furnished by the consciousness of a spiritual destiny.<sup>42</sup> The Shakers felt that there was a higher order to be attained than by the self-centeredness in the usual individual.<sup>43</sup> This higher order would give the Shaker more than commercial success, which they obtained through hard work. It would fulfill an act of piety and servitude which Christ and His disciples had shown by their own humble occupations.

Since the Shaker government was directed by the Ministry,<sup>44</sup> all Shaker villages were basically the same in the areas of religious and temporal organization, and architecture. Agri-

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<sup>40</sup>Record B, (October, 1836-1878), kept by the Ministry, p. 58.

<sup>41</sup>Record B, p. 22.

<sup>42</sup>Andrews, Community Industries, p. 37.

<sup>43</sup>Sears, Gleanings From Old Shaker Journals, p. 298.

<sup>44</sup>J. P. Maclean, The Society of Shakers (Columbus, Ohio: Fred J. Heer Press, 1900), p. 68; White and Taylor, Shakerism, p. 299.

culture, horticulture, and industrial art activities varied little between the colonies.<sup>45</sup> Order, industry, and subordination of the industry to the good of the whole--these were the aims of Shaker government.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Nordhoff, Communitistic Societies in the United States, p. 13.

<sup>46</sup>Melcher, The Shaker Adventure, p. 101.

### CHAPTER III

#### Agricultural Development

The Shakers of South Union were by necessity, if not by choice, farmers and gardeners. Aside from other economic considerations, this choice was necessary for self-sufficiency. Fortunately for the success of their venture, the land obtained by the Shakers was some of the most fertile in Kentucky. J. D. B. DeBow has said that the soil was loose, deep, black and without sand and about two or three feet deep. He went on to say that it was exceedingly luxuriant in all of its productions.<sup>1</sup>

Of primary concern to the Shakers was the growing of fruit, vegetables and grain. If they could produce enough of these goods, they would not have to rely on the other colonies for support and financial aid.<sup>2</sup> From this point, the Shakers could expand and develop their communal complex to an enterprising and profit-making establishment.<sup>3</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup>J. D. B. DeBow, The Industrial Resources of the Southern and Western States (New Orleans: DeBows Review, 1853) III, p. 398.

<sup>2</sup>The Shakers often made a practice of borrowing from another community when they needed financial help. The South Union colony frequently invested or loaned money but would not speculate. When the Shakers loaned money to another colony they would not charge interest, as this was considered usury.

<sup>3</sup>It should be remembered that although the primary goal

vegetable and fruit growing industry in the South was of no real commercial importance until after the Civil War.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, when the Shakers could produce a supply of their farm products more than sufficient for their own needs, they had little competition in selling them.

The Shakers raised many vegetables for their own consumption. As time went on, they tried to become more diversified, with the expectation of selling a wide variety of their products at the nearby markets of Bowling Green, Russellville, Clarksville, and Nashville. However, the Shakers were hampered by one problem from the beginning: there was never much variety in vegetables in the South because there was not much of a demand for it in the diet.<sup>5</sup>

The most important vegetable in the South was the sweet potato.<sup>6</sup> The reason for this was that it was easy to raise and it brought a large yield, ranging from two hundred to four hundred bushels per acre. These vegetables were planted in April or May and usually harvested in mid-October. More sweet potatoes were produced than any other vegetable at South Union.

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of the Shakers was not economic, a good economic base would serve as an answer to all of those who said that their communistic theory would not work. Profits would also allow the Shakers to send out missionaries and to make improvements on their own lands.

<sup>4</sup>Emory Q. Hawk, Economic History of the South (New York: Prentice Hall Inc., 1934), p. 268.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 268.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 267.

In 1828 the South Union colony set out fourteen thousand hills of sweet potatoes.<sup>7</sup> Often when the failure to harvest a crop might lead to its ruination, men were pulled from other jobs to help with the harvest.<sup>8</sup>

As a Southern product, sweet potatoes reached the height of production before the Civil War in 1850. In this year thirty million bushels were produced in the South.<sup>9</sup> Strangely, after this the sweet potato crop at South Union declined. In 1852 only four thousand hills were set out,<sup>10</sup> and in 1857 only two thousand, nine hundred hills were set out.<sup>11</sup>

Irish potatoes were also an important Southern crop. In 1850 twelve million bushels were harvested in the South. When the Shakers first planted Irish potatoes is not known,<sup>12</sup> but they were an important crop in South Union.<sup>13</sup> The Irish

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<sup>7</sup>Record A (1804-October 1836), kept by the Ministry. Copied by H. L. Eads, p. 427.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 241. [On this occasion in 1816 brothers who were cutting stone had to leave their job to go to the sweet potato fields to help save the crop.]

<sup>9</sup>Hawk, Economic History of the South, p. 267.

<sup>10</sup>Record B (October 1836-1878), kept by the Ministry, p. 192.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 238. [A possible reason for the decline of sweet potatoes was that with the growth of Southern production the Shakers lost their markets.]

<sup>12</sup>The planting of Irish potatoes is first mentioned in February, 1829. On this date the journalist writes, "Have lots of Irish potatoes." Record A, p. 443.

<sup>13</sup>The planting and harvesting of Irish potatoes is especially mentioned in the early 1830's, the 1840's and early 1850's.

potatoes were usually planted in February and March and harvested in October and November.

The Shakers seem to have grown cabbage primarily for the production of seed; however, they did grow cabbage for their own use. South Union Shakers apparently planted cabbage for their personal use in the summer.<sup>14</sup> The Shakers usually planted cabbage seed that was to be sold in October or November. They did produce some cabbage commercially; for example, they often made kraut and sold it down the river.<sup>15</sup>

One of the earliest vegetables raised by the Shakers was beets. Beets were usually put out in the late winter or early spring and harvested in the fall. In 1832 the Shakers showed their greatest diversity in beet production. In this year they planted twenty-six rows of beets. Of this number, seventeen rows were blood beets, eight rows were turnip beets and one row was yellow sugar.<sup>16</sup> In addition to those vegetables mentioned, the Shakers also grew carrots, sweet corn, peas, turnips, cucumbers, pumpkins, parsnips, asparagus, radishes, lettuce, green beans, and watermelons.

Fruit was another important Shaker product. A frequent topic in the journals was the care and condition of fruit.

<sup>14</sup>This was usually in late July and early August. However, they did on one occasion plant cabbage in late June. Record B, p. 192.

<sup>15</sup>Record A, p. 364. [On November 20, 1824, two barrels of kraut were sent down the river with 250 hogs and 100 sheep to be sold at New Orleans.]

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 505.



This concern for fruit was only natural since the Shakers usually devoted much of their land to orchards and berries. Especially was this true at South Union, which had a very extensive fruit outlay.

The most popular fruit at South Union was the apple. This is evidenced by the extensive planting of apple trees by the Shakers<sup>17</sup> and by the yield of the trees.<sup>18</sup> Apples were used for cider, jelly, and apple butter, and were dried to be eaten later. In 1831 the Shakers made 111 barrels of cider.<sup>19</sup> Four years later they made 100 gallons of apple butter and dried 100 bushels of apples.<sup>20</sup>

The Shakers continued to set out apple trees and to experiment with graftings in a hope of improving the quality of their produce. They planted over 900 apple trees before the Civil War and reaped outstanding returns from their investment. There are numerous comments in the journals that they had an abundance of apples.

The Shakers also raised peaches extensively.<sup>21</sup> However,

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<sup>17</sup>Record A, p. 196. [In 1814 the Shakers obtained 700 apple trees to plant.]

<sup>18</sup>"The Importance of Fruit Growing in the South," DeBows Review of Southern and Western States, X (June, 1851), p. 674. [This article states that one could harvest five bushels of apples per tree per year. At this figure the Shakers would harvest 3,500 bushels of apples a year from their 700 trees planted in 1814.]

<sup>19</sup>Record A, p. 498.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 589.

<sup>21</sup>The Shakers set out about 250 peach trees at South Union between 1807 and 1861.



they could not do as much with peaches as they could with apples; the main uses for peach production seemed to be for preserves and drying. The Shakers always seemed to have enough peaches for their needs. There are many notations in the journals of "peaches in abundance"<sup>22</sup> and "dried 150 bushels of peaches."<sup>23</sup> One of the happiest entries in August, 1856, was "peach pies begin to appear."<sup>24</sup>

Strawberries were a welcome addition to the South Union diet. Their enthusiastic reception is evidenced by the fact that one of the most regular annual notations in the journals was "strawberries ripe," "ripe strawberries appear," "first strawberries ripe," "garden strawberries ripe," and many similar reports giving an indication that summer was near. The Shakers got good returns from their strawberries. On one occasion they picked eight bushels of strawberries from one-half acre of ground.

Blackberries were a favorite fruit of the Shakers. The Shaker brothers often went blackberrying with the sisters, preparing lunch on the spot.<sup>25</sup> The main use of blackberries was to put up as preserves.<sup>26</sup> The Shakers preserved

<sup>22</sup>Record A, p. 474.

<sup>23</sup>Record B, p. 80.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 230.

<sup>25</sup>Blackberrying was one of the favorite forms of recreation for the Shakers.

<sup>26</sup>Record B, p. 229.

many other fruits. Among the most prominent of the minor fruits were cherries, raspberries, grapes and pears.

By far the largest agricultural crop, so far as acreage was concerned, was grain. The South Union Shakers had from the first raised corn, oats, wheat, flax, rye and hemp.<sup>27</sup> The Shakers had a great need for grain for their own use as well as to sell to the "world." One of the most widely produced grains at South Union was wheat. This was to be expected, for Kentucky was in the heart of the Southern wheat belt. The South produced about twenty-five per cent of the nation's wheat;<sup>28</sup> of this amount the upper South<sup>29</sup> produced about eighty-three per cent. The harvesting at South Union showed this popularity vividly.<sup>30</sup>

The Shakers were perhaps the most progressive farmers in the upper South. They often tried to increase their production with new harvesting techniques and machines,<sup>31</sup> but their greatest problem was nature. The Shakers had to face

<sup>27</sup>Julia Neal, By Their Fruits: The Story of Shakerism in South Union, Kentucky (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947), pp. 113-14.

<sup>28</sup>Hawk, Economic History of the South, p. 267.

<sup>29</sup>The upper South is usually considered as Tennessee, Maryland, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Missouri.

<sup>30</sup>1813--100 acres of wheat were sown, 1815--100 acres were sown, 1816--128 acres of wheat were cut, and in 1820--130 acres. The wheat production never seemed to have gone much higher from this point but on occasion did dip below this.

<sup>31</sup>This will be discussed in some detail in Chapter VII.

such setbacks as epidemics of rust and blight, two plant diseases. In 1815 the Shaker fields were hit by disease, almost one-half of the crop being destroyed.<sup>32</sup> The greatest wheat failure before the Civil War began in 1836 and lasted two years. A two-year drought plagued the country on this occasion, cutting the wheat harvest drastically.<sup>33</sup> The Shakers recovered by 1841 and they took twelve to fifteen bushels per acre.<sup>34</sup>

The progressive ideas of the Shakers were to pay big dividends. By improving their wheat land and harvesting methods, the Shakers were able to obtain twenty-two bushels of wheat per acre instead of the previous yields of twelve to fifteen.<sup>35</sup>

Corn production was also vital to the Shaker economy. Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia were the most prolific corn-producing states in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century,<sup>36</sup> and corn production at South Union got an early

<sup>32</sup>Record A, p. 217. In this year 110 acres of wheat were sown, but because of the rust and blight it was equal to only 50 or 60 acres of the previous year's crop.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 614. The Shakers harvested "only" 40 acres of wheat, obtaining 8 bushels per acre. The harvest in 1838 was better but it still suffered because of a hard winter and the drought. See Record B, p. 46.

<sup>34</sup>Record B, p. 84.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. 238-39. It should be noted that from 1850 to 1860 the production of wheat in Logan County more than doubled. In 1850 50,316 bushels were produced and in 1860 113,609 bushels were produced.

<sup>36</sup>Hawk, Economic History of the South, p. 266. In 1849

start.<sup>37</sup> The Shakers had a great need for corn, since they used it as feed for their cattle and hogs, made liquor from it, and ground it into meal.

The Shakers planted more acreage in corn than in any other crop. The greatest acreage planted in corn was in 1814, when 250 acres were planted. The highest pre-Civil War harvest for the Shakers was 1,700 barrels in July, 1852.<sup>38</sup> However, even with the large production of corn by the Shakers they still were often forced to buy from the "world's" corn.<sup>39</sup> The cause of the Shakers being forced to buy corn is not recorded. It is possible that the Shakers bought the corn, milled it themselves and sold it down the river at a good profit.

A useful crop, although of lesser importance than corn, was flax, which apparently was raised principally for the seed.<sup>40</sup> From the flax seed the Shakers would extract the oil. What

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Kentucky produced 58,672,591 bushels of corn and in 1859 64,043,633 bushels were harvested.

<sup>37</sup>Record A, p. 157. On November 9, 1811, 5,000 bushels of corn were reported to have been harvested.

<sup>38</sup>Record B, p. 198.

<sup>39</sup>Record A, p. 536. On October 3, 1833, the Shakers bought 100 barrels of corn "from a nearby plantation." In October 1846, 200 barrels of corn were bought from Tindle, a neighbor.

<sup>40</sup>There are no accounts prior to the Civil War of the Shakers making linen from flax.

the Shakers did with the oil is only speculative,<sup>41</sup> but it is possible that it was used for medicinal purposes.<sup>42</sup> The oil is also known for its drying properties, so it might have been used in paints. The Shakers might have used the seed as a cattle feed, but this also is unknown. The harvesting of the flax was usually accomplished by pulling the plant. This was often done by the sisters, who were on occasion aided by the brothers. After the flax had been pulled, it was spread out and allowed to dry. It was then taken up, bound, and hauled in to have the seed extracted.<sup>43</sup>

Although oats never held the place at South Union that corn, wheat, or flax did, it was nevertheless considered an important crop.<sup>44</sup> Except on one occasion, the Shakers, prior to the Civil War, always seemed to have enough oats. In 1831 the Shakers were forced to buy two hundred bushels of oats for fifteen cents per bushel.<sup>45</sup> The Shakers had further trouble

<sup>41</sup>It is known that on one occasion in 1835 the Shakers sold 56 bushels of seed for 62½ cents per bushel.

<sup>42</sup>South Union Shakers produced some medicines but this was a minor industry compared to the herb houses at New Lebanon and Watervliet.

<sup>43</sup>The largest acreage ever allowed for flax raising prior to the Civil War was in 1822. On this date 100 acres were "pulled." Record A, p. 328.

<sup>44</sup>The first record of oat sowing was in 1813. In this year 75 acres were sown. See Record A, pp. 180-81.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 473.

with their oat production in 1838 when it was severely hampered by the drought.<sup>46</sup>

Rye production in Kentucky was never a major industry,<sup>47</sup> nor was South Union an exception. The largest rye crop prior to the Civil War was twenty-seven acres.<sup>48</sup> The crop was usually sown in the winter and harvested in June.

The production of hay was very important to the Shakers. Hay was used to feed their cattle over the winter months; so although it was never a big product, it was nevertheless a needed crop.<sup>49</sup> The Shakers grew different grasses and clover to be used for this.<sup>50</sup> Hay was usually cut in June or July with possibly another cutting made in the fall.

Kentucky was the early national leader in the production of hemp.<sup>51</sup> South Union also produced hemp,<sup>52</sup> although the

<sup>46</sup>Record B, p. 46.

<sup>47</sup>Hawk, Economic History of the South, p. 267. Only 19 per cent of the rye raised in the United States was grown in the South. Most of this was in the upper South. Logan County raised about .6 of 1 per cent of the rye in Kentucky in 1850 and 1860.

<sup>48</sup>Record A, p. 509. This crop was planted in 1832.

<sup>49</sup>Hawk, Economic History of the South, p. 268. The State of New York in 1840 harvested four times more hay than the entire South. This is explained by the milder winters.

<sup>50</sup>It is possible that other types of hay were used besides these. Some examples of this might be flax, wheat, or silage might have been used to feed cattle.

<sup>51</sup>See James Hopkins, A History of the Hemp Industry in Kentucky (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1951).

<sup>52</sup>In 1821 14½ tons of hemp were "broken." Record A, p. 311.



journals do not state what it was used for.<sup>53</sup> It is possible that the seed was used to feed livestock or for medicinal purposes.

Livestock usually formed a consequential part of the economic program for farmers of the nineteenth century. This was no less true of the Shaker farmer; for him livestock investment was a well-planned and seriously considered venture that logically accompanied his other agricultural pursuits. He realized that if the quality was good, livestock selling would usually be a reliable source of income. Especially was this true in the South, since the Southern diet was heavily dependent on meat, particularly pork.<sup>54</sup> The market for meat in the South, coupled with the spiritual and temporal emphasis that the Shaker placed on work, destined the Shaker livestock industry to succeed.

Pork was also the meat most consumed by the Shakers, a fact which partly accounts for their large corn acreage. In the fall and winter months, the Shakers killed hogs for their own consumption and for "the world." The first mentioned killing of hogs at South Union was on December 1, 1814, when twenty-seven hogs were to be slaughtered for the winter.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>The hemp might have been used to make gunny sacks or cotton bindings.

<sup>54</sup>Emory Hawk, Economic History of the South, p. 27.

<sup>55</sup>Record A, p. 208. [Although this is the first time that it is mentioned hogs were killed, it is probable that they had been killed in other years but the journalist had not recorded it.]

After 1814 there were regular reports of yearly killings. The Shakers always seemed to have enough pork to eat except for the year 1829, when it was necessary for them to buy 2,600 pounds for \$78.00. In 1834 the Shakers dressed 24,950 pounds of pork, which was the most ever recorded in a single year.<sup>56</sup> With only 213 members in the society at this time, it is unlikely that the Believers consumed all of this pork; it is probable that they salted the meat or cut it into bacon and sold it down the river.<sup>57</sup> In 1840, however, a directive was sent from New Lebanon stating that hogs were unclean animals and should not be eaten; shortly thereafter, hog production ceased.<sup>58</sup> In early December, 1848, the Shakers sold thirteen hogs for \$2.00 each, and the next day they sold eight hogs for \$2.50 each.<sup>59</sup> This was the last mention of pork until many years later.

A source of constant concern for the Shaker was the improvement of his stock. He became quite expert in this regard, accomplishing his purpose through selective breeding. Colonies cooperated in efforts to develop better stock; for example, in October, 1832, the New Lebanon colony made a gift of an outstanding boar to South Union to help improve

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<sup>56</sup>Record A, p. 558, p. 562.

<sup>57</sup>Exactly what pork the Shakers ate was never reported.

<sup>58</sup>Edward Andrews, The People Called Shakers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 195.

<sup>59</sup>Record B, p. 163.



the breeding. The purchase of two Berkshire pigs in 1839 for \$50.00 was a further attempt to improve their strain.<sup>60</sup>

Although the Shakers found that pork was an excellent source of income, especially in the South, they made their most important contribution in the breeding of Shorthorn cattle. In June, 1822, the South Union colony bought a fine Durham bull, "Comet." However, shortly thereafter "Comet" died because he drank polluted water from the "little house."<sup>61</sup> To continue improving their stock, the Shakers purchased one young bull in 1827 and another in 1836. The most outstanding bull they owned was "Orion," purchased in 1839 for \$1,000.00 from a breeder in Lexington, Kentucky.<sup>62</sup> After the purchase of "Orion" the Shakers continued to improve their stock; in 1853 they bought another bull from the Pleasant Hill colony for \$300.00 and acquired another one in 1859.

With excellent breeding the Shaker herds became the best in Southern Kentucky. Their quality can be seen by the high prices paid for Shaker cattle. In 1852 the Shakers bought fourteen head of cattle for \$98.00. One year later they sold eight head of cattle for \$415.00.<sup>63</sup> During this period their herds averaged nearly two hundred in number, and

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>61</sup>Record A, p. 331.

<sup>62</sup>Record B, p. 53.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 202.

quality remained high.

The Shakers were not only concerned with beef cattle but were also interested in improving their milch cows, placing great stress on quality and quantity in milk. Members of the Society usually preferred milk to coffee or tea, so it was essential to have a good milk supply. Milk was also needed for making butter and cheese.

Raising sheep was another important area of stock breeding. Emory Hawk, in his Economic History of the South, states that the introduction of the Merino breed of sheep into the South caused the industry to spread rapidly.<sup>64</sup> The Shakers brought their first Merino sheep into South Union in October, 1811.<sup>65</sup> As they had done with hogs and cattle, the Shaker herdsmen continually tried to improve the wool by experimental breeding. The greatest advancement in breeding was made in 1836, when New Lebanon made a gift of three Bakewell sheep to South Union, and Union Village gave them a Saxon buck. An example will show how rapid was the resulting breeding improvement. Shearing sheep was an annual occurrence usually taking place in late April. In 1834 the Shakers sheared 770 pounds of wool from 204 sheep;<sup>66</sup> however, in 1844 with improved breeding, 1,806 pounds of wool was obtained from 332 sheep.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Hawk, Economic History of the South, p. 269.

<sup>65</sup>Record A, p. 129.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 545.

<sup>67</sup>Record E, p. 101.

Although the Shakers cannot take all of the credit, they should be recognized for the part they played in making Kentucky one of the leading producers of wool in the middle 1800's. In 1830 there were 4,824 sheep in Logan County where the Shakers lived and 1,102,091 sheep in Kentucky.<sup>68</sup> In 1850 there were 19,353 sheep in Logan County and 1,003,240 sheep in Kentucky.<sup>69</sup> The increased production by the Shakers and their neighbors bears witness to the outstanding progress made by the Shakers in developing a fine sheep program. Kentucky had about one-sixth of the woolen mills in the South in the nineteenth century, with the greatest boom coming between 1840 and 1860.<sup>70</sup>

The Shakers also had other animals. They, of course, had a great number of horses which were needed for ploughing and hauling. For some time the Shakers would not use mules because they felt mules were impure animals created by man and not by God; however, in the 1860 's the Shakers began to use them. They raised other livestock, although not for breeding. In 1834 they reported that they sold a yoke of oxen for \$65.00<sup>71</sup> and in 1847 they killed two oxen for food.<sup>72</sup> Their only bison

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<sup>68</sup>Fifth Census or Enumeration of the Inhabitants of the United States (Washington: Duff Green, 1832), p. 263.

<sup>69</sup>The Seventh Census of the United States (Washington: Robert Armstrong, 1853), p. 625.

<sup>70</sup>Hawk, Economic History of the South, p. 293.

<sup>71</sup>Record A, p. 547.

<sup>72</sup>Record B, p. 135.

was killed for consumption in December, 1828.<sup>73</sup>

Farm animals were not restricted to livestock, since the Shakers also raised poultry. In the 1820's they caught wild geese by feeding them and then driving them into an area fenced in by wire. Here they broke the first joint in the geese's wings so that they could not escape.<sup>74</sup> In 1826 the Shakers even made an unsuccessful attempt at domesticating quail.<sup>75</sup> The Shakers did not raise chickens commercially until the 1850's.<sup>76</sup> At this time there developed a "hen mania." Every consumer in the South had previously produced enough poultry for his own needs,<sup>77</sup> but now a new market opened up, and the South Union colonists took advantage of this by expanding their chicken production. The Shaker journalist who described the situation said, "The world seems agog for Roosters."<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>Record A, p. 440.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., p. 308.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., p. 385.

<sup>76</sup>Record B, p. 208.

<sup>77</sup>Hawk, Economic History of the South, p. 276.

<sup>78</sup>Record B, p. 231.

## CHAPTER IV

### Industries and Selling

Manufacturing played an important part in the economic success of the Shaker colony. As a self-sufficient community, which it was by choice, South Union needed to produce many articles for its own use. Realizing that many of their necessities were also needed by the other farmers and settlers, the Shakers took a natural advantage by producing enough manufactured goods to sell to others.

Each Shaker community specialized in certain items that were peculiar to its own area. The South Union colonists, for example, became known for their seeds and preserves.<sup>1</sup> However, these were not the only ways that the Shakers were able to make money. There were few sawmills in the early years of the nineteenth century, but the Shakers had two. They also had a fulling mill, grist mill, tannery, blacksmith shop, and many other things, the products of which their neighbors were interested in obtaining.

Practically all Shaker items could be produced in great amounts. This was desirable because the method was easier, faster, and more productive. Because of the predominance of women in the colony, industry was keyed to a large

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<sup>1</sup>For a list of the different seeds sold see Appendix.

number of women. Thus seeds, preserves, and weaving took a prominent place in Shaker industry. Weaving was one of the more diverse industries, with wool, silk, straw and cotton being the materials used.

The Shakers principally manufactured items that they needed and could not otherwise acquire. When someone else began to manufacture an item of equal quality and less expense than the Shakers manufactured the Shakers would usually stop producing the item. This was the case with pottery and glass, and later with shingles. The Shakers stopped producing shingles when they realized that they could buy them easier than they could make them.

The Shakers produced more garden seed than any other item. The first mention of the selling of seeds was March 7, 1821,<sup>2</sup> when Eli McLean and Isaac Choat went to Clarksville, Tennessee, to sell seeds. After this year there were annual accounts of seed production, packaging, and selling.

The Shakers continually tried to improve their seeds in an effort to give their customers the best possible results. As with their breeding program, they did this by introducing the most outstanding strains; for example, in 1835 the Shakers received early York cabbage seeds they had ordered from Dobs, Scotland.<sup>3</sup> There are citations in the

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<sup>2</sup>Record A (1804-October 1836) kept by the Ministry.  
Copied by H. L. Eads, p. 310.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 574.



journals of later imports of these seeds from time to time.<sup>4</sup>

The quality of Shaker seeds was evident by the growing business that the Shakers developed. In 1831 the Shakers boxed 32,290 packages. These packages sold for seven cents each, bring in a total of \$2,260.30 for the seeds.<sup>5</sup> Their production grew, and in 1837 the Shakers marketed 170,000 packages of seed.<sup>6</sup> This figure is astonishing in view of the fact that in this year the nation was suffering from the effects of one of the most devastating depressions in its history, the Panic of 1837. This increased production was helped by a hand press that printed the seed bags<sup>7</sup> and had a capacity of 10,000 bags a day.<sup>8</sup> The seeds were sold at a wholesale price to merchants throughout the South.<sup>9</sup> On occasion the Shakers had orders from eastern merchants for seed. The selling of garden seeds can be considered as the most outstanding economic endeavor of the Shakers.

An industrial product that started later than the seed

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<sup>4</sup>Record B (October 1836-1878) kept by the Ministry, p. 231. [On October 28, 1856, William Ware was sent to Louisville to pick up some garden seed.]

<sup>5</sup>Record A, p. 497.

<sup>6</sup>Record B, p. 36.

<sup>7</sup>See Appendix for a sample of one of these bags. The Shakers also put on the bag the instructions for setting out the seed.

<sup>8</sup>Record A, p. 379.

<sup>9</sup>This will be discussed in some detail later in this chapter.

production but grew quickly was the canning and preserving industry. Preserve making as a selling product is first mentioned in 1846.<sup>10</sup> The South Union colony had many types of fruits which it canned, the favorite being the apple, as cider could be made from this. There were also blackberries, strawberries, peaches, grapes, and pears, to mention only a few. The Shakers would order several thousand jars for canning from one of the jar makers such as Ball and Mason. Often the Shakers would have "SHAKER PRESERVES" put on the jar to give it a more distinctive touch. This let the buyer know that he was buying a Shaker product and that the quality of the merchandise was good. In 1858 the South Union colony produced what was probably the greatest amount of preserves for the market prior to the Civil War: five hundred cases or six thousand jars of preserves for the Southern market.<sup>11</sup>

The Shaker men, like most men of the "old Southwest," enjoyed drinking homemade cider, whiskey, and beer. According to Hawk, more money in the South was invested in whiskey than in shoes and boots.<sup>12</sup> The drinking habits of the South Union men were typical of their section, as the South produced eleven times as much liquor as the North.<sup>13</sup> On one occasion a Brother

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<sup>10</sup>Record B, p. 130.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 246.

<sup>12</sup>Emory Hawk, Economic History of the South (New York: Prentice Hall Inc., 1934), p. 297.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 298.



who had been to New Orleans on a selling trip brought back one barrel of New Orleans rum, four gallons of Madeira wine, and four gallons of Holland gin.<sup>14</sup> Typically, the Shakers undertook to provide a supply for the evident demand. Their first production in this line was cider, which became a fairly important product. Early in 1814 the South Union brothers set out 700 apple trees.<sup>15</sup> In August of the following year the Shakers built a cider press.<sup>16</sup> Thomas Smith built their first distillery and began production of hard cider in March, 1823;<sup>17</sup> the Shakers were later to make beer<sup>18</sup> and wine.<sup>19</sup> Although in 1827 the New Lebanon colony decreed that liquor was to be used only for medicinal purposes,<sup>20</sup> the South Union colony continued to make cider, beer, and wine after this. In 1831 the Shakers made 111 barrels of cider from bruised and refuse apples.<sup>21</sup> Some of this cider was sold, but much of it was probably consumed by the Shakers. Shaker cider was a familiar taste to many people in the South, and it helped to spread the Shaker name of quality.

<sup>14</sup>Record A, p. 503.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 196.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 219.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 341.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 454.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 537-38.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 493.

South Union had one of the finest dairy herds in Kentucky. Consequently, it was only natural for the Shakers to find a product for the large quantity of milk that was produced. Cheese seemed the most logical product. The Shakers made most of their cheese in the early 1830's, and after this period the journals do not mention further production.<sup>22</sup> When the Shakers were making cheese, however, they were doing so in large amounts: in August, 1830, they made 1,500 pounds of cheese;<sup>23</sup> on another occasion they made 475 pounds of cheese.<sup>24</sup>

The Shakers, "with an eye to the demands of the outside world,"<sup>25</sup> continuously tried to anticipate the needs of others as well as their own. One of the first construction projects of the Shakers was a sawmill.<sup>26</sup> The following year the grist mill was started.<sup>27</sup> These milling projects, along with the fulling mill that was also one of their early industries, were

<sup>22</sup>The reason for this failure to mention cheese production after this is not known. It is possible that production became negligible after this period with the construction of ice houses and the ability of the Shakers to keep milk and butter for long periods of time.

<sup>23</sup>Record A, p. 474. [The "cheeses" were made in blocks weighing from 25 pounds to 37½ pounds each.]

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 511.

<sup>25</sup>Edward Andrews, The Community Industries of the Shakers (New York State Museum Handbook 15: Albany, 1923), p. 27.

<sup>26</sup>Record A, p. 172. [On July 23, 1812, the Shakers began the foundation of the sawmill.]

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 182.

used by the Shakers but were also patronized by their neighbors. By 1816 the Shaker journalist stated that the sawmill, fulling mill, and grist mill were doing well.<sup>28</sup> The sawmill was in such a demand for use that in 1819 another mill was constructed at Drake's Creek.<sup>29</sup> Besides turning out boards for the construction of their own buildings, the Shakers also sawed boards for their neighbors.<sup>30</sup> By 1820 the sawmill was making \$1.00 per hour for the Shakers. They also made lathes, brooms, and fence rails.

Since the Shaker sisters were outstanding weavers, a fulling mill was needed to process the cloth and make it ready for the market. The Shakers also received cloth from people in northern Tennessee and southern Kentucky. They were able to process as much as 1,800 yards of cloth in a single day, and they processed over 8,000 yards of material in a year. The fulling mill continued to be a steady source of income for the Shakers.

The Shakers possibly used their grist mill more than any of their other milling operations. They themselves kept the stones grinding steadily, but there was also the "world's" grain to be ground.<sup>31</sup> Peak acreage for each of their grain

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 229.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 289.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 159. On December 12, 1811 the Shaker journalist recorded, "The 'world' brought in a log to be sawed."

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 229.

crops was 30 acres of flax,<sup>32</sup> 180 acres of oats,<sup>33</sup> 125 acres of wheat,<sup>34</sup> and 27 acres of rye,<sup>35</sup> and they harvested a record 1,700 barrels of corn in 1852.<sup>36</sup>

With typical thrift, the Shakers found a use for the straw left from the threshing. They would split the straw with a "straw splitter" and weave it into bonnets or hats. In their own way, the Shakers enjoyed competing with each other. On one occasion Harvey L. Eads and Milton Robens had a contest to see who could plait the most straw in one day. Eads plaited 120 yards and Robens 114 yards. However, Eads stated when he was copying this incident in a journal that Robens had plaited much better than he had and this made up the difference in amount.<sup>37</sup> The Shakers kept a detailed record during the late 1820's as to the amount of straw that had been plaited. In 1828 it was recorded that 1,613 yards had been plaited between December 2, 1827, and June 9, 1828.<sup>38</sup> This is the largest recorded amount in the Journals.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Record B, p. 182.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 238.

<sup>35</sup>Record A, p. 509.

<sup>36</sup>Record B, p. 198.

<sup>37</sup>Record A, p. 427.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 429. [For some reason after 1829 the plaiting of straw is not mentioned. Yet this must have been done, as bonnets and hats were sold much later. Record A, p. 568.]

One of the items that was needed by the Shakers was sugar. Most of the sugar that South Union produced came from an "out family"<sup>39</sup> farm, Black Lick.<sup>40</sup> It was here that the Shakers grew their cane for molasses and had their sugar maple trees. As early as 1813, a period when the society was still struggling for existence, they were tapping trees at Black Lick.<sup>41</sup> This continued to be a "sugar farm" for many years. However, production declined until in 1857 they attempted to supplement their usual cane with the planting of "Chinese Sugar Cane in hope to get more molasses than that which we get at New Orleans from Louisiana cane."<sup>42</sup>

One of the earliest industries started at South Union was a tannery.<sup>43</sup> South Union had so many cattle that it was only natural that they should have a tannery. The tanned goods were used to bind books and to make hat bands. In 1822 George Waddle, the chief tanner, bought Spanish hides for \$200.00.<sup>44</sup> On a trip in 1831, South Union purchased

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<sup>39</sup>An "out family" were those people who were Shakers but who looked over Shaker property that was not physically connected to the main Shaker colony.

<sup>40</sup>Black Lick was also known as Watervliet, Maple Sugar Farm, or Sugar Camp. This farm was located approximately four miles west of South Union and borders what is now Auburn, Kentucky.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>42</sup>Record B, p. 238.

<sup>43</sup>Record A, p. 146. [Four vats were sunk April 12, 1814.]

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 338.

\$206.30 in Spanish hides to be processed.<sup>45</sup>

One of the unique industries of the South Union Shakers was their cultivation of silkworms. The first mention of this industry was in 1832 when it was recorded, "sisters appeared in new homemade silk kerchiefs for the first time at South Union."<sup>46</sup> Shortly after this in June, 1832, the sisters harvested 137 pounds of cocoons from their mulberry trees.<sup>47</sup> This seems to be the largest amount of cocoons harvested prior to the Civil War.<sup>48</sup> The Shaker sisters continued to make kerchiefs for themselves, for the brethren, and to sell to the "world."<sup>49</sup>

The Shakers often hired themselves out as carpenters to do special jobs. They would build flatboats for other traders so that they could send their trading goods to New Orleans or some other place on the river.<sup>50</sup> Sometimes the

<sup>45</sup>T. J. Shannon, "A Journal of a Voyage from South Union, Kentucky to New Orleans, Louisiana, Commencing 6th October, 1831."

<sup>46</sup>Record A, p. 502.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 509.

<sup>48</sup>Emory Hawk, Economic History of the South, p. 295, states that silk production in the South was a failure and moved North. However, J. D. B. DeBow, The Industrial Resources of the Southern and Western States (DeBow's Review: New Orleans, 1853), II, 403, brings out the fact that Kentucky produced 6,970 pounds of silk in 1846. According to the Shakers, one pound was equal to 805 cocoons. Record A, p. 509. It would hardly seem that silk production in the South was a failure or at least in Kentucky.

<sup>49</sup>Record B, p. 248. January 1, 1859 the Sisters made 164 white silk pocket kerchiefs to be sold for one dollar each.

<sup>50</sup>Record A, p. 424.



Shakers would build the boat at South Union and carry it overland by ox cart to the river.<sup>51</sup> On one occasion in 1835, when a cholera epidemic ravaged the area, the Shaker craftsmen made twenty-four coffins for their neighbors.<sup>52</sup>

South Union had many industries that did not require the expense of milling or the time of weaving, but which were important to the Shakers. One of these minor industries was the herb culture. This was not really a large operation at South Union as it was at New Lebanon, but it did have a very definite place. The Shakers had an herb press and processed some herbs.<sup>53</sup> Another minor enterprise of the Shakers was beekeeping, which was important in the South around the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>54</sup> South Union colonists often reported swarmings of bees as noteworthy events.<sup>55</sup>

The Shakers, aside from the industries previously mentioned, ran a cotton gin, raised indigo, and made shoes, carpets, half bushel baskets, gauging rods, shingles, bricks, and many other items.

The Shaker was a jack-of-all trades. One man might be a master carpenter as well as a weaver, gardener, and tanner. This multiplicity of jobs would insure that each individual had work the year around and that no one would be idle.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 395.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 583.

<sup>53</sup> Record B, p. 130.

<sup>54</sup> Hawk, Economic History of the South, p. 270.

<sup>55</sup> Record B, p. 141, p. 258.

The Shakers produced a great amount and variety of goods. With this variety and quality, they could usually find a good market for their goods and a dependable source of income. The distribution and selling of their products was thus a keystone to the successful economic development of the South Union colony.

The outstanding goods that the upper South sent to the deep South were corn on the ear, pork, bacon, whiskey, cattle, fowls, brooms, cabinet furniture, plows, apples and cordage.<sup>56</sup> The Shakers sent south such things as horses, baskets, straw hats, seeds, brooms, flour, carpets, gauging rods, rules, books, onions, cider, whiskey, potatoes, herbs, cattle, hogs, sage, jeans, and thyme. The market was usually good for Shaker products even in the height of a depression.

The Shakers distributed their wares in several ways. Sometimes people would come to the colony to purchase goods; on occasion merchandise was mailed to customers; but usually the Shakers would go to various areas peddling their items. Often the goods were distributed through dealers. The great bulk of Shaker selling was done by the brothers personally peddling their goods or by regular dealers. They seem to have had fairly well-defined marketing areas. Their markets were as far north as northern Illinois, and ranged to the west as far as Galveston, Texas. Eventually they covered

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<sup>56</sup>Emory Q. Hawk, Economic History of the South, p. 272.



most of the southeastern United States.

The most picturesque method of selling goods was to send them to New Orleans by flatboat. Indeed, a great amount of trade was carried on in this fashion.<sup>57</sup> by this method large amounts of goods and produce could be sent down the river at relatively small expense. Another advantage was that stops could be made along the way and goods sold to dealers at Memphis, Vicksburg, Baton Rouge, and New Orleans.

The following is an account of what was probably a typical journey from South Union, Kentucky, to New Orleans, Louisiana, on a flatboat. Thomas J. Shannon recorded the details of the trip in the journal he kept as he and three other brothers went down the river in 1831. The journey began in October, 1831, and the brothers returned to South Union in February, 1832.

The journey began on the Red River, where the wagons were taken and the goods loaded on the boat.<sup>58</sup> One of the

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<sup>57</sup>Some historians contend that this was the usual method of trade. However, the writer feels that although this was a heavy source of income and usually brought to the Shakers more money than any other one trip, the general rule is that the river trips brought no more than one-third to one-half of the monetary income of the Shakers and on occasion brought less than one-fourth of the income.

<sup>58</sup>Journal of a Voyage from South Union, Kentucky, to New Orleans, Louisiana (October 6, 1831-February, 1832), kept by T. J. Shannon. [The pages are not numbered in this Journal.] [The boat was either built by the Shakers at South Union and taken by them to the river or they built the boat at the river. On occasion someone else would build the boat for them.]

first places that they passed was "a little place called Bowling Green." All along the river the small group made regular stops to see friends; and wherever there were people they stopped to see if there was anything that they could sell. One of the perils on the way down the river was places such as Devil's Elbow near Canton, Kentucky, where the rapids often caused the loss of boats. They took many shortcuts on the river often saving them much time. The Shakers usually got their meals by shooting squirrels, deer, or turkeys on the journey.

Traveling down the river past Eddyville, they stopped at Smithland and then moved to Paducah. After the traders reached the Ohio River, traveling became much more hazardous and waves on one occasion rose to between four and six feet.

Traveling two or three days on the Ohio River, the party entered the Mississippi, where they began to make regular stops. On one occasion they stopped at Randolph, Tennessee, to collect money from a man with whom they had left seeds the year before.

Moving down to Memphis, the Shakers first checked to see if they had any mail bringing news of the colony and then went about their business in Memphis. The Shakers first made their rounds to merchants who had traded with them previously, collecting the unsold packages and giving

them new ones. After completing their business with these local merchants, the Shakers sold to anyone else interested in buying their carpeting, socks, and garden seed.

Leaving Memphis, the Shakers spent almost an entire day trying to help a boat off a sand bar. When this was finished, they drifted on down the river and tied up near the steamboat Helepolis.<sup>59</sup> Continuing their journey, they stopped two or three times, retailing seeds<sup>60</sup> and making stops at their regular merchant customers. The Shakers sometimes traded seeds for other goods to take to New Orleans or to take back to South Union.<sup>61</sup> The Shakers next stopped at Providence, where they sold \$58.00 in goods. From here they moved to Vicksburg. When the Shakers arrived at Vicksburg, they sold \$200.00 in seeds. One of the familiar sights to the Shakers on this journey was the steamboat Walter Scott. The Walter Scott was used by the government to take Indians to Arkansas from down-river. While at Vicksburg, the Shakers sold \$600.00 in goods.

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<sup>59</sup>This was a boat owned by the United States government and used to keep the river clear of snags.

<sup>60</sup>The Shakers sold seeds to merchants wholesale, but when they sold them to individual customers, they were sold at a standard price.

<sup>61</sup>The Shakers on one occasion traded cider and apples for pecans. Moving down the river, they traded 448 seed packages for twenty bushels of apples and \$21.36.

After the Shakers left Vicksburg, they went to Grand Gulf. They stopped there, rented two horses, and went to Port Gibson, where they sold \$105.00 in goods. Leaving here, the Shakers put in at Petit Gulf and Rodney, selling respectively \$120.00 and \$180.00 in seeds.

The next major stop on the journey was Natchez. There they made their regular stops, picking up unsold seed and putting up new packages. In Natchez they also traded their Mississippi money for United States and Louisiana money. Continuing down the river, they stopped at Fort Adams, Bayou Sarah, St. Francisville, and Baton Rouge. They spent a short time at Baton Rouge, and then went to New Orleans.

At New Orleans the Shakers sold or traded their goods with various people. They deposited their money in the New Orleans Office of Discount and Deposit and then looked for the products that were needed at South Union. After buying the merchandise they needed, the Shakers had their goods loaded on a steamboat to go back up the river. Their up-river trip was interrupted by an ice jam, and periodic stops were made for wood and passengers.

The Shakers left their steamboat at Smithland and rented a house in which to store their goods while they waited for a boat traveling to Nashville. A boat came up from Nashville and could not enter the Ohio, so the captain offered to take all of the merchants to Nashville for \$300.00. After this was accomplished, the Shakers rented wagons at

Nashville which took them to South Union.

A look at what the Shakers purchased at New Orleans will give a good indication of what South Union needed.<sup>62</sup>

2 hogsheads of sugar 4686 lbs.	\$303.23
9 bags of Rio coffee @ 15c	226.65
1 bbl. molasses @ 37c per gal.	9.65
4 bbls. mackerel no. 1	24.50
1 bbl. tanners oil	16.00
1 bbl. New Orleans rum @ 33c per gal.	12.38
4 gal. Madeira wine	13.00
4 gal. Holland gin	7.00
76 Spanish hides	205.80
3 boxes of codfish	4.87½
8 lbs. sperm candles	3.00
1 box tea 48 lbs. @ 37½c	72.00
½ bbl. copperas @ 10c	4.90
3 bbls. Roman cement	30.00
1 box of glass and medicine	10.00
2 bags of Havana coffee	52.08
	<u>\$1002.25½</u>

The Shakers continued to use boat trips to sell goods until 1842. In this year the Shakers took the steamboat Governor Breathitt to Vicksburg to sell garden seed.<sup>63</sup> From this date, they used the steamboat rather than the slower models that they had built.

The Shakers conducted the majority of their selling by peddling to merchants. This made possible an efficient, large-scale selling operation that developed gradually over a period of years. The Shakers actually started by selling goods in their own locality to Hopkinsville, Nashville, Bowling Green, and Clarksville. In the beginning this

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<sup>62</sup>Journal of a Voyage.

<sup>63</sup>Record B, p. 89.

trading was probably in those things which the Shakers produced for themselves and they were able to make enough of them to trade at local stores for goods that they needed. As the quality of the Shaker goods became better known then there was more of a demand. With this increased demand as well as an increase in manufacturing ability the Shakers began to expand their goods.

After a slow start in selling trips, the Shakers began to go farther South.<sup>64</sup> In 1824 the Shakers made their first trip "down the River,"<sup>65</sup> The number of trips and their length continued to increase and in 1828 six trips were taken. After this there was a decrease in the number of trips made.<sup>66</sup> The trade trips began to rise again in the 1830's, and in 1838 the Shaker traders took a pre-Civil War record number of ten.<sup>67</sup> During this rise in the trading of the Shakers they began to go to new places in Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Georgia, Tennessee, Louisiana, and Texas.

<sup>64</sup>From 1815 to 1824 the Shakers took six trips selling goods. Most of these trips were to Hopkinsville, Nashville, and Clarksville.

<sup>65</sup>Record A, p. 363.

<sup>66</sup>The author cannot explain the reason for the decrease in the number of trips except that in the late 1820's South Union had a tremendous loss in population.

<sup>67</sup>Oddly enough, the population was still going down at South Union, and this record high also comes at a time when the economy was feeling the effects of the Panic of 1837.



However, this height in trade began to fall off, possibly as a result of a severe drought which plagued the South in the late 1830's. With the steamboat the Shakers could now ship goods whenever they wished and would not have to wait for a boat to be built. One of the favorite techniques of the Shakers was to send one or two men south with wagons, selling goods and making deliveries. Then they would send more goods on a steamboat, and the brothers would meet the steamboat at Memphis or Vicksburg, load up their wagons again with goods, and go farther south. In this way the Shakers could still sell on the river to regular customers, and they could also sell to people in the interior.

The trade continued to improve slowly in the 1840's and to branch out into different areas.<sup>68</sup> The Shakers continued to trade their basic items of seeds, brooms, preserves, cattle, and sheep as well as domestic goods. Business was slow at first, but later became very brisk.<sup>69</sup>

The 1850's saw a rise in the number of Shaker trading trips. They were now taking more trips than they had in the past decade and selling more goods on each trip. New areas of trade were being opened in the West. They began to take

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<sup>68</sup>The population also improved during this period, going from 177 in 1841 to 233 in 1850.

<sup>69</sup>The Shakers in the early 1840's were forced to give a lot of credit but they felt that they did well considering the hard times that the farmers were having in the South. Later in the late 1840's with the discovery of gold in the West the Shakers' economy, like that of the nation, improved.



their goods--livestock, especially--to the West where a good price could be obtained.<sup>70</sup> Farm prices were rising in the early 1850's, and the Shakers took advantage of this.<sup>71</sup>

The late 1850's saw a decrease in the trips taken by the Shakers.<sup>72</sup> It was, however, still considered important. The Shaker economy was still in good condition, as evidenced by the fact that they produced 1,000 bushels of wheat in 1859 and had a strong building program in progress.

Some business with the "world" was conducted directly from the Shaker community. On several occasions peddlers came by and bought seeds from the Shakers to sell on their peddling tours.<sup>73</sup> Another method of selling seeds was by mail order.<sup>74</sup>

The Shakers realized that to improve their distribution and sales they would have to take certain steps in increasing their selling incentives. One of the first methods used to in-

<sup>70</sup>In the 1850's the Shakers started making trips to Illinois and went north to Cincinnati, Ohio.

<sup>71</sup>The Shaker trustees would often take further advantage of a situation by holding their crops to be sold until the late winter when the prices were higher and then sell their goods.

<sup>72</sup>In 1857 a Panic hit the United States. Although it was not as severe as the Panic of 1837, it did make a definite indentation on the economy as farm prices went down. At this time there was also a loss in the population of South Union. In 1857 the population was 253 and in 1858 the population went to 230.

<sup>73</sup>Record B, p. 40. In 1838 a peddler came by the office and bought \$150.00 in seeds.

<sup>74</sup>Record A, p. 545. On one occasion Prince and Sons of New York bought \$81.48 in garden seed from the Shakers.

duce sales of goods and services' was the use of handbills. This was started as early as 1815 and was used steadily as a means of advertisement. Posters were put up wherever Shaker goods were sold.

Another method of advertisement by the Shakers was in the printing of their own seed packages.<sup>75</sup> They would print the name of the seed on the package and then tell how the seed was to be used.

The Shakers often had "SHAKER PRESERVES" moulded on the glass bottles in which their preserves were sold. This was done so that the buyer would know that he was getting an authentic Shaker-made product. This practice also spread the Shaker name even after the preserves had been used.

Despite these effective techniques, the greatest advertisement for Shaker goods was not by the Shakers themselves; the word-of-mouth on the frontier was the fastest means of communication. The quality of their products assured the Shakers of a market ever-responsive to their goods. The customer came to know that the Shaker products were the best of quality and that any item with the Shaker name on it would be of good material and excellent workmanship.

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<sup>75</sup>See Appendix D.

## CHAPTER V

### Internal Improvements

A study of the crops, manufactured products, and livestock of the Shakers gives keen insight into the economic development and progressiveness of this group. Another area also plays an important part in the economic soundness of a community. This area is internal improvements.

The Shakers' desire for self-sufficiency led them to start new industries, many of which required specialized facilities. Besides the actual construction of such manufacturing establishments, these facilities involved maintenance, repair, improvement, and any needed expansion. The Shakers were constantly seeking production innovations that would be the means of improving efficiency and quality.

The Shakers felt that their land and its improvement also belonged to God; thus they were constantly bettering their roads, fences, and soil. They often cleared the land of brush to plant trees or crops. The care the Shakers took of their land is testified to by its high resale value.

As the South Union colony grew, one of its primary needs was for the construction of new and larger facilities. The existing buildings on the Shaker property were soon inadequate for the large number of people that were to come to

South Union.<sup>1</sup> One of the earliest South Union buildings--a frame house on the north side of the road<sup>2</sup>--was erected in 1810. Not long after this a barn was constructed for the Center House.<sup>3</sup>

The realization soon came to the Shakers that if they were going to continue the building program which they were presently pursuing they would need more building materials. As a result, in June and July of 1812 they began construction of a brick shop, a stone shop, and a sawmill.<sup>4</sup> One can thus see that the Shaker industries were a natural outgrowth of existing needs among the Shakers themselves.

By 1813 the Shakers had progressed to the point that they could begin to turn their attentions to the construction of subsidiary buildings for their own use; that is, the building would house an industry designed to produce a finished product rather than material for construction. The first such venture was a tailor shop, and this was followed by the construction of

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<sup>1</sup>On January 1, 1814, the South Union colony had 300 members.

<sup>2</sup>Record A (1804-October 1836), kept by the Ministry and copied by H. L. Eads, p. 120. The road spoken of in this case is what is known as U. S. 68 today.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 127. This barn constructed in 1811 was to be used by the Center Family. It is assumed that the Frame House constructed in 1810 was this Center house and was the first "Family" house constructed at South Union.

<sup>4</sup>The Shakers prior to this seem to have had a mill of some sort, for repair of the mill dam is reported in January, 1812. However this might have been a dam that they had constructed for the purpose of building a mill nearby. Ibid., p. 162.

a grist mill two months later.<sup>5</sup>

In 1814 the Shakers made their first attempt to start an industry that would be of importance to themselves but would also serve as a source of revenue from the "world."<sup>6</sup> The installation of four tanning vats opened the door to tanning as a new means of income for the Shakers. Later the Shakers constructed a coopers shop.

As the Shakers began to expand their enterprise by adding new industries, they also continued to construct facilities that would fulfill the Society's own needs. In 1824 the Shakers constructed a new Center House and a cistern south of the meeting house.<sup>7</sup> The following year a new office was built,<sup>8</sup> a new kitchen at the East House was built, and repairs were made on the fulling mill and the grist mill.

A major building program was started in 1818. In that year a stable, a machine shop, a buzz saw house, an oil mill,<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 184, 188.

<sup>6</sup>This was not the first time that the Shakers had attempted to develop an industry the world would use. The Shakers encouraged the "world" to bring logs to the sawmill to be sawed.

<sup>7</sup>The meeting house was constructed on the south side of the highway.

<sup>8</sup>The office as it was called was just that. From this place the Trustees conducted the business of the colony.

<sup>9</sup>The oil mill in this case was possibly for the extraction of linseed oil from the flax seeds. However this is only speculative as it was never stated exactly what type of oil was being extracted.

and a coal house were placed under construction. It can be seen that the Shakers continued to improve their programs. However, they also expanded into a wider range of manufacturing areas. The following year a cider press was constructed and a corn crib was started.

Between 1829 and 1837 no major building was done at South Union with the exception of some repair construction.<sup>10</sup> It seems that the Shakers were getting their second breath to start a more intensive building program that would last for over two decades.

This accelerated development saw the addition of four new corn cribs and two new barns for the storage of Shaker crops over the next twenty years. One of the corn cribs built at the Center House was a double crib which would hold five hundred barrels of corn.<sup>11</sup> Nor did the Shakers neglect their livestock industry. A new slaughterhouse and a new smokehouse were constructed about the middle of the century. Also a new cow barn, two horse stables, and an addition to the ox stable were made.

The Shaker construction projects were primarily for their own benefit. Some of these were replacement construction such

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<sup>10</sup>In 1835 a new sawmill was constructed, but this seems to have been merely an enlargement and refinement of one of the older ones.

<sup>11</sup>Record B (October 1836-1878), kept by the Ministry, p. 148. The cribs and barns were constructed over a four-year period--1847-1850. This would coincide with the fact that this was about the time that South Union was producing some of its largest grain crops prior to the Civil War.



as a new sawmill, a grist mill, stone shop, steam house and office, while others were areas of construction completely new to the Shakers, such as icehouses and woodhouses. A major Shaker project was the building of four washhouses to be used as work areas for men as well as for women.<sup>12</sup> The greatest construction project of the Shakers was the building of the West Family house. Constructed at the crossroads, this was the largest frame house at South Union.<sup>13</sup>

In 1857 surveys were made, and in 1860 a railroad was built through Shaker property. The Shakers constructed a tavern, depot, and store and the train began to make regular stops. The architecture of the tavern, last major construction project before the Civil War, was unique. Unlike the other Shaker buildings, the tavern was built with an eye to the world. Its six large columns are a distinct change from the Center House with its plain front. The tavern has a distinctively Southern accent and is the only example of Shaker architecture prior to the Civil War that is an obvious variation from the standard Shaker form.

For the Shakers to maintain their extensive building program, a constant source of quality materials was needed.

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<sup>12</sup>The washhouses were used for the washing and drying of clothes but they were also used as shop areas, such activities as processing herbs perhaps being performed there.

<sup>13</sup>West Family house burned in 1861 and the house was almost a total loss.



When the Shakers first began to build, there were no supplies that they could use or afford; so as we have seen, they turned to their own resources to supply their needs. The Shakers could always be sure of their own products; therefore, until someone else could supply them more cheaply they continued to produce their own materials. Builders cut their own stone for foundations after it had been brought in.<sup>14</sup> The lumber for the frame of the buildings and for the siding of some was cut on the Shaker mills, which were almost continuously supplying the Shakers' needs. In the construction of Shaker buildings the most prominent building material was brick.<sup>15</sup> Each Family owned its own brick kilns and moulds, and so each Family could produce whenever the need arose or in cooperation with the other Families for a joint project.

The Shaker sawmills, besides producing the lumber for building construction, also made shingles until approximately 1834 or 1835. After this date the Shakers started buying shingles, having found that it was easier to buy them than to make them.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>It is thought that at least some of the stone used for the foundation to the Shaker houses was possibly brought from Bowling Green, Kentucky.

<sup>15</sup>The author calculates that approximately 2,500,000 bricks were made between 1807-1861. This calculation is made on the basis of figures reported in the journals, as well as other considerations.

<sup>16</sup>Up until 1834-35 the Shakers had made all of their shingles from black oak. After this they bought them. The bought shingles were made of pine, a much more pliable material than oak.

Another product of the Shaker sawmills was laths. The laths were something like latticework which was nailed to the frame of the building. Over the laths the Shakers would then put plaster which they had made from their own lime and sand.<sup>17</sup>

The Shaker Family house was built from the ground up with Shaker materials, glass and iron being the only exceptions. Indeed, they even improved on some iron articles in their blacksmith shop. The furniture in the houses was usually the product of the carpentry shops and like the architecture was very plain and without decoration. The Shakers also made most of their paint, which was considered among the most permanent ever made.<sup>18</sup>

Although conservative in their building and architecture, the Shakers were very interested in every new mechanical and farming variation that would improve the yield or speed production. As a result of this desire, they always bought the latest in farm machinery. This progressiveness was not a trait of just the South Union colony but was the rule rather than the exception in all of the Shaker communities.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>The Shakers would get up to 55 wagon loads of lime from a kiln that they would burn and would get their sand from the knobs.

<sup>18</sup>The Shakers made their red paint in a very unusual manner. They mixed brick dust and buttermilk and made a very pretty red paint that is extremely durable.

<sup>19</sup>The Shaker publications and letters often carried articles on how to improve the yield of crops and accounts of new developments in farming techniques. Advice was often asked of another colony. See Appendix A.

As early as 1811 the Trustees were looking at new milling techniques.<sup>20</sup> Not long after this John Rankin was sent to the Pleasant Hill colony to learn the tanners' trade.<sup>21</sup> The Shakers usually bought new machinery, often reverting to the age-old custom of bartering when they were low on cash and needed an article.<sup>22</sup> Like any progressive farmer, the Shakers saw a need for a cotton gin, flax machines, hominy beater, new plows and corn shellers.

Growing the large amount of grain that they did, the Shakers seem to have invested more money in threshing machines than in any other kind of farm machinery.<sup>23</sup> The new machines were noted in the journals, with the improvements of each type of machinery being listed.<sup>24</sup>

When the improvements were made in Shaker farm implements, the women were not forgotten; many labor-saving devices were purchased for the sisters. In 1829 the first cook stove was introduced to South Union, and within a year all of

<sup>20</sup>John Rankin went to Tennessee to look at a new mill, Record A, p. 153.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 140. This was not the only way that a trade was taught. In 1844 Charles Davis arrived from Nashville to "learn Brother H. L. Eads to bind books." Record B, p. 98.

<sup>22</sup>In 1821 the Shakers bought a new carding machine for three horses. Record A, p. 317.

<sup>23</sup>On at least eight different occasions prior to 1861 the Shakers record that they purchased new threshing or reaping machinery.

<sup>24</sup>In 1828 they could thresh 130 bushels per day. In 1832 they could thresh 400 bushels per day and in 1857 they could thresh 120 acres in 5½ days.

the Families were using cook stoves.<sup>25</sup> To help the women in their weaving, a new silk loom was purchased in 1836.<sup>26</sup> The community bought three new spinning machines in 1840,<sup>27</sup> and in 1849 a spinning machine that would run 120 spindles was purchased.<sup>28</sup> The invention that helped the women as much as any thing was the sewing machine. This machine, invented in 1846, was introduced into South Union in 1855.<sup>29</sup>

The Shakers, however, went beyond mere efficiency; they were vitally interested in anything that would bring greater safety and convenience into their lives. In 1850 they began to install lightning rods on most of their buildings.<sup>30</sup> Possibly the most surprising improvement in living for the Shakers was the installation of plumbing at South Union. This installation process was started in 1837 and went on for several years.<sup>31</sup>

The Shakers took excellent care of their property. They would often grub out land and replant it in trees. This

<sup>25</sup>Record A, p. 449.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 616.

<sup>27</sup>Record B, p. 68.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 168

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 217.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>31</sup>The extent of the plumbing at South Union is not exactly known. Although there is evidence that the Shakers did have water flowing through lead pipes to their cow barns.

served an immediate practical purpose, and it also greatly enhanced the value of the land. They made a practice of repairing their roads and keeping them in good order.<sup>32</sup>

When there was a need for new roads, the Shakers would survey, cut, and build them.<sup>33</sup> They also built an extensive pattern of fences in and around their property.<sup>34</sup>

The South Union Shakers were eventually to have approximately 7,000 acres of land in their holding. Land usually sold for \$6.00 to \$8.00 per acre in that area of Kentucky, but the Shakers sold some land that they had owned and worked for \$16.00 per acre. Obviously, the careful handling of property was profitable.

Frequently the notation "good sale" will appear in the journal, testifying to the business acumen of the Shakers.<sup>35</sup> It can be seen that they took excellent care of their property, always in so far as possible leaving it in better condition than it was given to them. The Shakers continuously tried to make not only needed improvements to aid them in their work but improvements that would help those people who would follow them.

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<sup>32</sup> Oftentimes the entire community would come out to work on the roads.

<sup>33</sup> Record A, p. 387.

<sup>34</sup> The fences were usually rails. Later, however, the Shakers used rock and plank fences.

<sup>35</sup> Record A, p. 276.

## CONCLUSION

Before a final conclusion can be drawn, another area of economic endeavor--that of hired labor--must be considered. The Shakers stressed efficiency, and when circumstances warranted such a practice, it was not unusual for the Shakers to hire skilled craftsmen or common laborers.<sup>1</sup>

Skilled labor was hired oftentimes to teach Brothers a trade or to act in an interim capacity helping Brothers who were hard pressed doing other jobs.<sup>2</sup> The Shakers would often hire shoemakers, hatters, stone cutters, and carpenters to help take up the load when the lack of manpower was a problem. However, on at least one occasion a man was hired for a longer period of time. In 1817 a blacksmith was hired for \$400.00 per year.<sup>3</sup>

The most controversial labor problem was the use of slaves<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Shakers hired common laborers as a last resort. They were usually able to do all of the work in their usual work day. They rose usually at 4:30 A.M. in the winter and 5:00 A.M. in the summer and retired in the evening about 9:00 P.M.

<sup>2</sup>One of the major problems that the Shaker men encountered was a lack of numbers. There were usually more women than men and each man thus had to be trained in several special skills.

<sup>3</sup>Record A, (1804-October 1836), kept by the Ministry. Copied by H. L. Eads, pp. 251.

<sup>4</sup>As early as 1813 there was a Negro family at South Union with a Negro elder. Edward Andrews, The People Called Shakers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 214.



and the connection of slavery with the colony. The colony on occasion owned slaves. When a convert joined the society, he would often bring his slaves with him and give them to the society; or he might keep them, and the slaves would in turn work for the society. As early as 1811 the elders spoke to the heads of families that brought slaves with them, asking them to free their slaves.<sup>5</sup> Another meeting was held in 1819 asking all slave owners to free their slaves and to give them a written paper signed by the slave owner and by the County Court Clerk, stating that the slave was free. Shortly thereafter all of the slaves were finally freed. "We may look for a stampede soon," stated the Shaker journalist; but the anticipated result of this emancipation--a great exodus of freed slaves--did not materialize, for many of the Negroes stayed.<sup>6</sup>

The South Union brothers conferred with New Lebanon as to what position to take on the slavery issue. They received only evasive answers and there was no consistent policy. On one occasion John Rankin, one of the South Union leaders, sent

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<sup>5</sup>Record A, p. 236. All members agreed, with the exception of one man.

<sup>6</sup>There was one occasion in which a former slave went on a river boat trip with some of the brothers. During the trip the Negro became enchanted with steamboats. On the return trip to Nashville, Sampson, as the man was called, decided to leave the Shakers and take a \$15.00 per month job on a steamboat. His companions earnestly tried to persuade him to return to South Union. It is reported that he said, "Talk to me about Eternal Life! Why Jesus Christ never saw a steamboat." Julia Neal, By Their Fruits (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947), pp. 60-61.



a letter to New Lebanon asking the following questions.

1. Shall money or property which has been obtained from the sale of slaves be refused or accepted by the Church of Christ?
2. If refused, how far removed from the sweat and blood of the slave must money or property be in order to render such money or property acceptable to the Church? Our sugar and coffee comes directly from the toiling slave through his master, and is acceptable. Should money be equally so?
3. There is a sister of 25 years standing and 15 years in the church, whose father in Tennessee, being the owner of some slaves, died intestate. By the laws of that state, "Made and provided" the court has to sell the property, slaves included. The proceeds of this sale brings to the heirs \$2000.00 each. We have received for the heir who is with us \$1600.00 & soon will have the balance--when question No. 1 is answered we will know what to do.<sup>7</sup>

It can be seen that the South Union Shakers were liberal in their early opposition to slavery. On one occasion when slaves were being taken south to be sold, they were chained together in two's going past the Shaker village; the journalist recorded, "Does God see this? Rather think he does!"<sup>8</sup>

On December 31, 1835, a covenant was signed by the South Union Shakers stating that no more slaves were to be hired. The journalist reported, "The renunciation of the practice of hiring slave labor generates new feelings."<sup>9</sup> Apparently these "new feelings" brought conflict, for there is reason to be-

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<sup>7</sup> Andrews, The People Called Shakers, pp. 214-15. [The answer to this letter is not recorded.] [In matters of major policy the local community would often ask the advice of New Lebanon.]

<sup>8</sup> Record A, p. 455.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 604.

lieve that some of the Shakers violated the covenant. As a matter of record, in early July, 1836, a breakfast lecture was given the brethren on the willful violation of the agreement of the past December concerning the hiring of slaves. The Brother insisted that all slaves should be immediately dismissed.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, the practice of hiring slaves did not stop here but continued, possibly until its natural conclusion with the Civil War.<sup>11</sup>

To make an evaluation of the contribution of the South Union Shakers to the agricultural development of the upper South is difficult at best because many of the advancements cannot be stated in a factual or statistical form. The reason for this being that the influences of the Shakers on agriculture and its development in the South were felt for many years to come. Many of these influences of the Shakers cannot be evaluated in their proper perspective and will thus never be truly known and will be only speculative.<sup>12</sup>

There are tangible results of the Universal Shaker movement which may be considered at this point. The Shakers saw no virtue or economy in hard labor when the brain could work

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 614.

<sup>11</sup>Record B, (October, 1836-1878). Kept by the Ministry, p. 97.

<sup>12</sup>An excellent account of the economic development of Shakerism in the West is given by Gerald Ham, Shakerism in the Old West, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1962.

out an easier method.<sup>13</sup> The Shakers invented the screw propeller, rotary harrow, sash balance, turbine water wheel, threshing machine, planing machine, fertilizing machine, cut nails, circular saw, improved washing machine, pea-sheller, butter worker, self-acting cheese press, first one-horse wagon in the United States, common clothes pin, metal pins, first flat broom, machine that filled sandbags, a printing press, machine for filling herb packages, and many other devices to improve their work. Nearly all of the Shaker inventions were unpatented because they felt that such a monopoly would be contrary to the Golden Rule.

South Union from its beginning was a model farm.<sup>14</sup> The colony introduced many new vegetables to a region known for its monotonous diet. Following the lead of their fellow Southerners, in the beginning they produced great quantities of sweet potatoes, but as their production decreased in this area, it rose in other areas of vegetables. The Shakers began to introduce many improved vegetables to the South, often importing from outstanding foreign producers seeds which would in turn improve their own crops. The Shakers through importation of seed and selective production made improvements in corn, car-

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<sup>13</sup>Anna White and Lelia Taylor, Shakerism, Its Meaning and Message (Columbus, Ohio: Fred J. Heer Press, 1904), p. 310.

<sup>14</sup>The Shakers were considered such model farmers that a man identified as Fanning, who operated an agricultural school near Nashville, brought 90 of his students to visit and observe the Shaker techniques. Record A, p. 100.

rots, beans, lettuce, turnips and many other vegetables.

The Shakers also did much to expand the fruit industry in the upper South and Midwest, especially with their production of apples and peaches. The apple was the favorite fruit at South Union as it could be used in cider, jelly, and apple butter, or it could be dried. They were also fond of blackberries, grapes, pears, and cherries.

From their earliest beginnings at South Union, the Shakers raised many grain crops. In fact, the greater part of Shaker land was given over to grain, most common being corn, which could be ground for meal to be sold or used by the Shakers themselves. The corn was also used for liquor or fed to the hogs that represented another aspect of their thriving agriculture. They also raised oats, rye, flax, and hemp, and in typical Shaker fashion they used every part of the plant that they could.

Possibly the greatest contribution made by the Shakers was in the improvement of livestock. The Shakers were years ahead of all others in their area in selective breeding and improving blood lines. In their famous "Comet," they brought the first shorthorned bull into the West. In 1829, when Henry Clay stopped at South Union with John J. Crittenden, he probably looked at their beef cattle, for Clay was one of the outstanding cattle breeders in the West.<sup>15</sup> He often did business with the Pleasant Hill Shakers, trading bulls and making other

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<sup>15</sup>Record A, p. 455.

such transactions. The Shakers also improved their hogs with the importation of Berkshires. The South was a strong market for pork, and the South Union Shakers made the most of this opportunity. The Shakers also found a ready southern market for their wool products, and the South Union weavers were making good profits as a result of their improved production techniques.

The South Union Shaker colony created almost as outstanding a name for itself in home manufacturing as it did in its agricultural endeavors. The best known South Union products were, by a direct connection to their agricultural pursuits, seeds and preserves. The Shakers produced a larger volume of seeds than any other article, marketing as many as 170,000 packages in one year. The fruit yielded to the extent that the Shakers could produce thousands of jars of their well-known preserves each year. The Shakers also produced cider, cheese, brooms, silk, and many other articles that were sold to eager customers.

It can be seen that with a great variety of vegetables of outstanding quality, fruit which had been improved through grafting, selective livestock breeding and home manufacturing, the Shakers proceeded to establish a balanced economy. The Shakers could and did withstand financial strains which would have caused other industries to falter.

Selling by the Shakers was, of course, a very important concern to them. They realized that regardless of the quality

or amount of production a good form of selling and distribution was needed. The Shakers built their sales and increased it to a point where they were probably unequaled in their field.

The Shakers felt a keen personal interest in their property. They always left property in better condition than when they received it. Their personal lives also reflected this practice. They persistently strove to improve their lot, not merely for their own personal benefit, but for the betterment of man. Shaker success in reality did not come from the markets at which they sold their quality goods, but from the society's religious values and cultural inheritance.

South Union developed in the nineteenth century in the manner of a young town, and indeed they were in a unique way. They had their own stores, and what amounted to their own municipal authority. Their uniqueness was in a common bond that held them together in a spiritual, temporal, and social compact. However, as the author leaves South Union in 1861 it is seen at what was perhaps its peak. From this point on, South Union made a slow descent as the Civil War with its social and economic changes spurred the decline.

Whether the influence of the Shaker has been, is, or will be important can only be left to the reader. The individual must decide for himself what is good and worthwhile from the Shakers.



APPENDIX A

Letter from the Andrews Collection

South Union July 31st 1819.

Dearly beloved Ministry,

Your letter of June 4th was duly and very thankfully received on the 10th instant. Your very kind and loving letter fell very precious to us, and we beg of you to be so kind as to receive our sincere thanks and humble acknowledgements. As you wished of us to send you a line on receiving yours, we are happy in doing so. Be so kind as to inform good Mother, that we think it a privilege to submit to a little reproof if it does not, sometimes, come in a way that we should like it. But at any rate, we are Mother's children, and therefore we shall have to endure enough, be it little or much and whether it comes in a way that we like it or not. We are thankful, indeed we are always thankful, for our good Mother's love and well wishes, and for the love and well wishes of our friends in the East, and you may depend on it, we shall labour to merit the love and good will they manifest towards us. It does us good to hear that our precious Mother is comfortable, and that our good Sister Martha is comfortable, and we would be glad to hear too, that good Elder Abiathan is comfortable and well.



In relation to counsel about buildings and "many other things" as you mentioned, we are thankful that a way may be opened freely to communicate and receive--as we believe and feel agreed that it is a matter of the greatest importance to be in union in all things of consequence to the honor and prosperity of the gospel throughout the whole body of Believers everywhere.

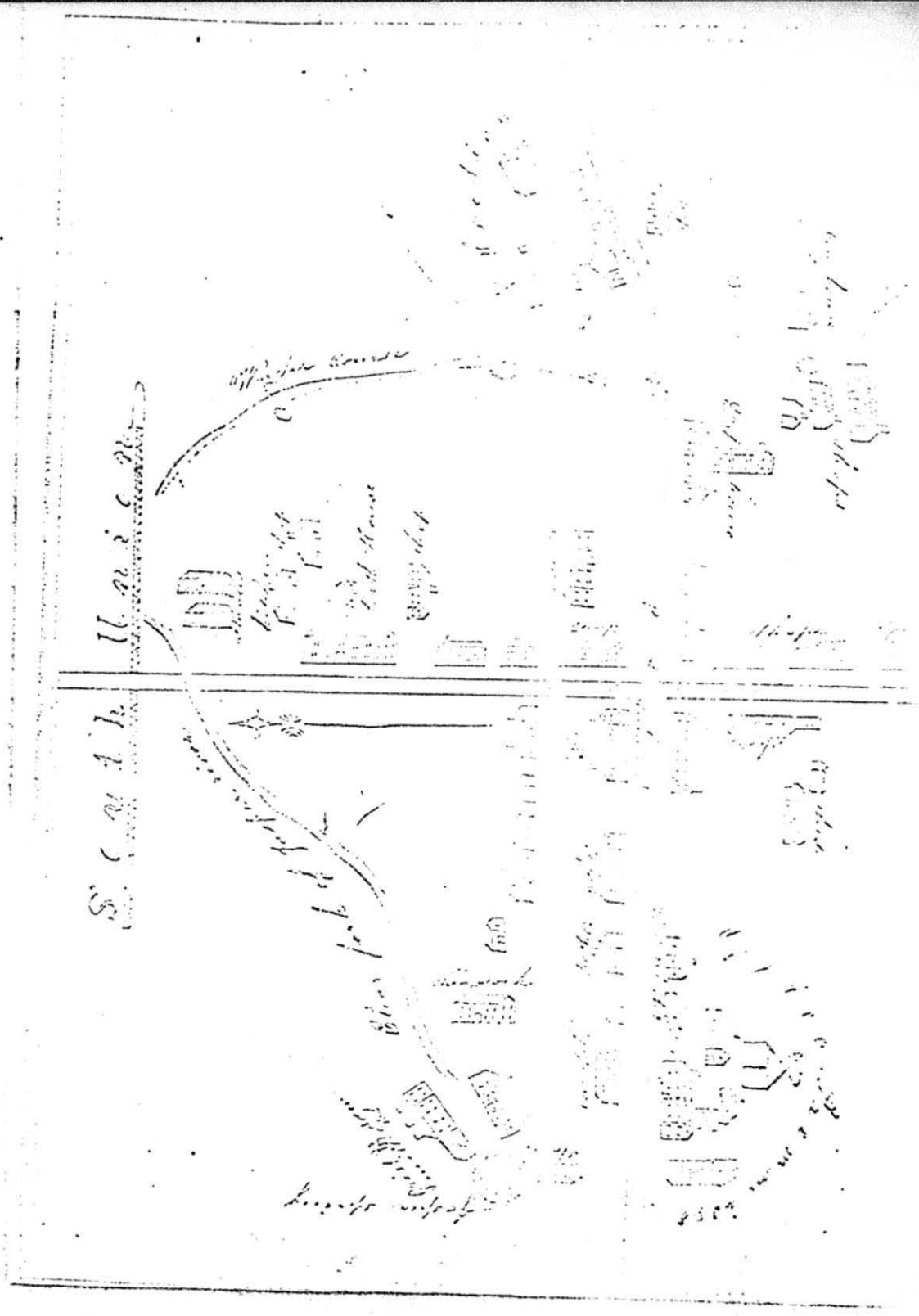
We cannot as yet write any thing to Lebanon--we have received no letters from there for a long time.

At present, we should like to know by a few lines from some of the Brethren, whether what is called White coating in plastering the inside of buildings is approved and made use of as valuable among the Believers and a few words of their most improved rules for common plastering. This we would be glad to receive soon.

Also, there has lately come here, a young man apparently in much trouble by the name of Albert Whittemore.--We cannot write lengthly.--He says that he was twice among the Believers at Enfield (con.) and that being with and ratting and having his own head, they rejected him--Now he wants very much a privilege among the Believers here--but not feeling satisfied about him until we could hear from you, the Young brethren have hired him to work at Point where they are building their Mills, for about 3 or 4 months, as it were upon trial, until we can feel some satisfied what we might or ought to do--and we would be glad to receive in particular what you know or feel

about him as soon as you consistently can. We are comfortable as usual, and in common health and so are the Believers generally. We should be glad to write particularly our thanks to the Brethren and Sisters, at Tyringham especially, for their goodness in sparing Brother Joseph so long for the good of the Believers in this country, if we knew how to get at it, but at present we do not. Our best love to you all--to the Ministry at Lebanon, and to all the good Elders Brethren and Sisters, as far as you feel.

from Benjamin, Molly and Mercy.



S. C. A. L.

U. S. C. R.

Upper House

Lower House

Old House

Young House

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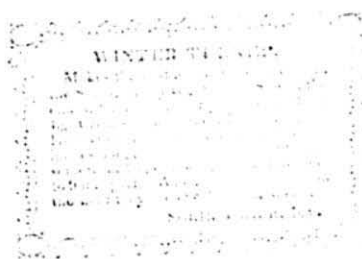
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# APPENDIX E

## Seeds Sold by the South Union Shakers

Bunch Bean	Early Speckled Valentine Snap Early Yellow Golden Wax German Wax
Pole Bean	White Vine Southern Prolific Large Lima or Butter
Beet	Large Blood Yellow Turnip Yellow Sugar
Carrot	Large Orange
Cabbage	Large Drumhead Flat Dutch Early Flat Dutch Early Drumhead Early York Large York Early Winningsladd
Corn	Sweet Adams Early
Cucumber	Long Green White Spine Early Bunch
Collard	Southern
Celery	White Solid
Kale	Tall Green Curled Scotch
Lettuce	Ice Head White Loaf
Melon	Nutmeg Water Montreal Nutmeg Banana

Mustard	Curled Brown White (Medical) Giant Southern Curled
Okra	Dwarf
Onion	Large Red White Silver Skin
Parsley	Double or Curled
Peppers	Sugar Large Red Extra Early Early May White Marrowfat Long Scarlet Crimson Turnip Rooted White Summer
Salsify	Vegetable Oyster
Spinach	Smooth Seeded
Squash	Early Dutch Bunch True Hubbard
Tomato	Large Red Livingston Favorite Acme Large Trophy
Summer Turnip	Purple Top White Top Flat Dutch



# APPENDIX F

## Population of South Union 1814-1861

1814-195	1830-221	1846-213
1815-210	1831-220	1847-210
1816-*	1832-210	1848-*
1817-*	1833-212	1849-222
1818-218	1834-213	1850-233
1819-312	1835-209	1851-245
1820-*	1836-214	1852-260
1821-313	1837-210	1853-255
1822-320	1838-200	1854-259
1823-340	1839-198	1855-254
1824-340	1840-193	1856-254
1825-320	1841-176	1857-253
1826-326	1842-190	1858-230
1827-350	1843-182	1859-*
1828-338	1844-215	1860-222
1829-328	1845-215	1861-218

\*Population not reported.

These figures were taken from Journal A and Journal B.

THE  
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OR  
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United Society.

The

Constitution

or

Covenant

of the

CHURCH

at

South Union

Jasper Valley

Kentucky.

1830.

We, the undersigned, the Ministry of the United Society at Canton, Independence, Kentucky, having duly examined the following Covenant which is agreed to, and regularly signed and sealed by the members of the Church, on a day of October, in the year of our Lord 1830. Do hereby approve and recommend the same as a general Constitution or Covenant for the Church at said Independence and we do also certify the same to be in true conformity with the Constitution or Covenant of the first and primary Institutions of our Society.

(By authority of our said primary Institution)

(Signed)

South Union, Independence, Kentucky }  
December 12, 13, 14 1835. O.S.L.

Benjamin D. Hays

Meloy Gordon

Mercy Phipps

We, the undersigned of the Church at New Lebanon, New York, do certify that the foregoing Certificate, together with the former Covenant or Constitution, has been inspected by us, and found to be in conformity with that of the Church of this Society, meets our full approbation.

New Lebanon, Aug. 29<sup>th</sup> 1835.

Seth W. Hays

Reuben W.

# Constitution & Covenant.

## Preamble

We the Brethren & Sisters, members of the United Society of Free called Shakers at South Union in the County of Logan & State of Ohio being for many years connected together as a religious & social community in virtue of our distinguishing faith & mutual agreements; in order fully to confirm our principles of government, increase our union, our social compact, protect our equal rights & privileges and secure ourselves & posterity in the gospel the blessings of peace & tranquility mutually agree to adopt and by these presents do adopt the following articles of agreement made, ordained & declared by the proper authorities of the Church of our said United Society, in its senior departments as a confirmation of the principles, rules and regulations originally established in said Church and which we as members thereof agree to keep and maintain, both in our collective & individual capacities, as a Constitution & firm Covenant, which shall stand as a lawful testimony of the terms & conditions of our association with all men and in all cases of question & law relating to the perfecting improvement of our consecrated interest, property & estate, until the same be altered or amended by general consent and in accordance with the laws & authorities of the institution.

## Article I. Of the gospel Ministry.

### Section 1. Their origin call and institution.

We solemnly declare to each other & to all whom it may concern that we have received and do hereby acknowledge as the foundation of our order & government the Testimony or gospel of Christ in his first and last appearing, and we do hereby solemnly agree to support and maintain the same and principles rules & manners pertaining to the said gospel as manifested by the founders of this United Society and kept & conveyed through a regular ordination down to the present day. -- and altho we are variously separated as to the local situations of our respective communities, yet we are known & distinguished as a peculiar people, and consider & acknowledge ourselves as born of one general Community professing one faith, and subject to the spirit administration of one united parental & ministerial gift which has been regularly supported from the first foundation pillars of the institution, and which continues to operate for the support protection & strength of every part of said community.

### Section 2. Their Order and Office.

We further acknowledge & declare, that for the purpose of promoting brotherly union & harmony throughout the various branches of this community, the gift of parental authority has been settled in the first established Ministry at Newburgh in the State of New York, here to rest & remain as the general center of union and are held in gospel relation & communion. The Ministry comprises the parental ministerial gift, and consists of four persons, two of each sex. Moreover, the Society at Union Village in the State of Ohio, being first in their call & that obedience of fully hereby agree to hold & respect the same as being constituted a leading & central Society in the Western States.

### Section 3. Perpetuity of & manner of filling the Ministerial Office.

We further acknowledge & declare, that the said primary gift of parental authority is perpetuated as follows, namely: That the gift in that office & with the right by the sanction of divine authority given through the first founder Society to prescribe or direct any regulation or appointment which they may deem proper & necessary respecting the Ministry or any other important matter may concern the welfare of the Church subsequent to their decease. When such regulation or appointment be so prescribed or directed, then the right and authority such regulations & appointments, devolves upon the survivors of the Ministry, in council with the Elders of the Church or others, as the nature of the case, in, their judgment may require.

### Section 4. Of the Ministerial Office in the several Societies.

We further acknowledge and declare, covenant & agree, that the Ministerial Office and authority in any Society or community of our faith, which is constituted, or which may emanate, in a regular line of order, from the communion aforesaid, is, and shall be acknowledged, owned & respected as the actual authority of such Society or Community, in all matters pertaining to the said Ministerial office. And in case of the decease, removal or removal of any individual of said Ministry, in any such Society, his or her place shall be filled by agreement of the surviving Ministers in council with the Elders and others, as the nature of the case may require, together with the knowledge and approbation of the primary gift of authority at New York aforesaid, to which they are responsible.



## Section 5. Powers and duties of the Ministry.

We further acknowledge and declare, That the Ministry being appointed as aforesaid, are vested with the primary authority of the Church & its members - hence it becomes their special duty to guide and superintend the concerns of the Society as a body of people under their care & government with the Elders, in their respective families or departments who shall act in with them, to give & establish such orders, rules & regulations as may be necessary for the government protection and welfare of the Church and its members within the limits of their jurisdiction; and also to counsel advise & judge in matters of importance whether spiritual or temporal. The said Ministry are invested with authority, in connection with the Elders, as aforesaid, to nominate and appoint to office, Ministers, Elders, Deacons & Trustees, and to assign office and trust to such brethren & sisters as they, the said Ministry & Elders shall judge best qualified for the several offices to which they may be appointed. And the Society, do consent & agree, That such nominations & appointments being made & officially communicated to those concerned, and receiving the general approbation of the Church, or of the families concerned, shall therefor be confirmed and supported until altered or revoked by the same authority.

## Article II. Institution of the Church.

### Section 1. The object & design of Church relation.

We further acknowledge & declare, That the great object, purpose & design of our union as a Church or body of people in social & religious compact is faithfully & honestly improve, and diffuse the various gifts & talents both of a spiritual & temporal nature with which Divine Wisdom has blessed us, for the service of God, for the honor of his gospel, and for the mutual protection, support, comfort & happiness of each other & sister in the gospel, and for such other pious & charitable purposes as the gospel may

## Section 2. Who are not admissible into Church relation.

As the unity, stability and purity of the Church, spiritually depend on the qualifications of its members, and as it is a matter of importance that it be <sup>with purity</sup> incumbered, who are under under any involvement or incapacity criminal or moral:—Therefore no member of any company in business or civil co-partners in trade,—no person under any legal involvement or obligation, — no minor, — no slave or bond-servant, — no slave-holder, — no insane, — no profane person, nor any person who lives in the wilful & habitual violation of any known & acknowledged principles of moral rectitude, shall be deemed for admission into the Covenant relation and communion of the Church.

## Section 3. Preparation for admission into Church relation.

In order that believers may be prepared for entering into the sacred privilege relation, it is of primary importance that sufficient opportunity & privilege be afforded under the ministry of the gospel for them to acquire suitable into the genuine principles of righteousness, honesty, justice & true-holiness; and also should prove their faith & principles by their practical obedience to the precepts of the gospel according to their instructions. It is also necessary for them to receive the unifying spirit of Christ, and become so far of one heart & one mind, that in willing to sacrifice all other relations for this sacred end. That they open to settle all just & equitable claims of creditors & fellow heirs; so that whatever they may possess shall be justly their own. When this is done, and they are sufficiently prepared to make a deliberate & final choice to devote themselves to the service of God without reserve, and it shall be deemed proper by the members of the Society, after examination & due consideration, to allow them to enter into the capacity of a Church, or a branch thereof, in gospel order, they may then call themselves & all they possess to the service of God forever, and confirm the same by sending a written Covenant predicated upon the principles herein contained, and living in their part all its obligations.

### Section 4. Admission of new members.

As the door must be kept open for the admission of new members into the Church when duly prepared, it is agreed that each and every person who shall at any time after the date and execution of the Church Covenant, in any branch of the community, be admitted into the Church as a member thereof, shall previously have a fair opportunity to obtain a full, clear and explicit understanding of the object and design of the Church Covenant and of the obligations it enjoins on the members. For this purpose, he or she shall, in the presence of two of the Deacons or acting Trustees of the Church, read or hear the same distinctly read, so as to be able freely to acknowledge his or her full approbation and acceptance thereof, in all its parts. Then, she or they, as the case may be, shall be at liberty to sign the same, & her signed and sealed it, shall thenceforth be entitled to all the benefits and privileges of other members: and shall also be subject to all the obligations required of the original signers: And the signature thus added, shall be testified by the said Deacons or Trustees, together with the date thereof.

### Section 5. Concerning Youth & Children.

Youth and children being minors, cannot be received as members of the Church possessing a consecrated interest ~~restored~~ in a united capacity, it is agreed, That they may be received under the immediate care and government of the Church, at the desire or consent of such person or persons as have a lawful right to <sup>such</sup> minors, together with their own desire & consent. That no minor under the care of the Church can be employed in any avocations of any kind.

## Article III. Of the Trustees.

### Section 1. Appointment, qualifications & powers of Trustees.

It has been found necessary in the establishment of the Church in this State that superintending Deacons or agents should be employed & authorized as Trustees in the temporalities of the Church. They must be recommended by honor & integrity, their fidelity in trust, and their capacity for the transaction of business; of which qualifications the Ministry & Deacons must be the judges. Trustees are generally known among us by the title of office Deacons, of whom are usually two of each sex: and being appointed by the authority aforesaid, and by the general approbation of the Church, they are invested with power to the charge & oversight of all the property, estate & interest, dedicated, devoted, given, and given up for the benefit of the Church: to hold in trust the fee of all so belonging to the Church; together with all tithes, gifts, grants & donations, have been or may hereafter be dedicated, devoted & given up as aforesaid: said property, estate, interest, gifts, grants & donations, shall constitute the consecrated interest of the Church, and shall be held in trust by the said acting Trustees in their official capacity, & by their successors in said office & trust for

### Section 2. Duties of the Trustees.

It is and <sup>shall</sup> be the duty of the said Deacons or acting Trustees to improve the said consecrated interest for the benefit of the Church in all its departments: viz. religious & charitable purposes as the gospel may require & the said Deacons or acting Trustees according to counsel & in their best wisdom may judge proper: Also to make an equitable defence in law for the protection & security of the consecrated & vested rights & privileges of the Church & Society, jointly & severally, as an incorporated body as far as circumstances & the nature of the case may require. Further we declare that all the transactions of the said Deacons or acting Trustees, in the use, management, collection, defence & disposal of the said interest shall be for the benefit & protection of the Church or the Society as aforesaid & not for any private interest or purpose.

Section 3. Trustees to give information & be responsible to the Ministry & Elders.

It shall be the duty of the said Trustees to give information to the Ministry & Elders of the Church of the general state of the temporal concerns of the Church, especially, as related to their charge, and also to report to said authority all transactions in the written interest thereof which shall come under their report, and regardless of any of the real estate of the Church, nor any important transactions connected shall be considered as valid, without the knowing approbation of the authority aforesaid, to whom the said Trustees or Trustees now and shall at all times be responsible in all their official transactions.

Section 4. Account-Books & Books of Record to be kept.

It shall be the duty of the Trustees or acting Trustees to keep or cause to be kept, regular books of account, in which shall be entered the debit & credit accounts of all mercantile operations and receipts & transactions between the Church and others; all receipts and expenditures of cash, notes and of account, and all matters that concern the written interest of the Church; also a book or books of Record in which shall be recorded a true & correct copy of this Covenant; also also all appointments, removals and changes of Ministry, Elders, Deacons & Trustees; all admissions, removals, deaths & decrease of members; together with all other matters & transactions of public nature which are necessary to be recorded for the benefit of the Church and for the preservation & security of the documents, papers & written books pertaining to the written interest & concerns of the Church & submitted to the Church; and the said records shall be at least annually inspected by the authorities of the Church; and they together with the Trustees shall be the official seal of the same; and the signature of one or more of said auditors with the date of the audit shall be deemed sufficient authority for the facts & matters recorded.

### Section 5. Trustees execute a Declaration of Trust.

For the better security of the united & common interest of the Church proper uses & purposes stipulated in this Covenant, it shall be the duty of Trustees or Trustees who may be vested with the said real estate or real estate of the Church, to make & execute a Declaration of Trust, in of date, embracing all & singular the lands tenements & hereditaments & matters of interest pertaining to the Church which, at the time being, vested in him or them, or that may, in future, come under his or their office, during his or their said Trusteeship. And the said Declaration, expressly, that the Trustees hold such lands, tenements, hereditaments, & personal property of every description belonging to the Church, or Society, for the uses & purposes expressed in and subject to the rules, conditions & regulations prescribed by the Constitution & Covenant of said Church & Society, or amendments thereto, which shall hereafter, by the general approbation of the said Church, and in conformity with the primitive faith & acknowledged principles of the said Church, shall be in writing duly executed under his or their seals, & shall be recorded in the Book of Records provided for in the preceding

### Section 6. Vacancies in certain cases to be supplied.

The further Covenant and agree, that in case it should at any time happen that the office of Trustee should become wholly vacant by death or otherwise in such case, one or more Successor or Successors shall be appointed by the authorities recognised in this Covenant, according to the rules & regulations by the same: And the said appointment being duly recorded in the <sup>Sec. 4.</sup> Records provided for in this Article, shall be deemed to have been declared in such Successor or Successors, all the right, interest and authority of the Trustees in respect to all such lands, property or estate belonging to the Church or Society aforesaid.

## Article IV. of the Eldership.

### Section 1. Choice and appointment of Elders.

The united interests and objects of Believers, established in gospel, require that Elders should be chosen and appointed for the spiritual peace of families, who are to act to take the lead in their several departments in the care and government of the concerns of the Church and of the several families established in, and pertaining to the Society. They are to be persons of good understanding, of approved faithfulness & integrity and gifted in spiritual administration. They must be selected & appointed by the Ministry, who are to judge of their qualifications: And their number in each family must correspond with that of the Ministry.

### Section 2. Duties of the Elders.

As faithful watchmen upon the walls of Zion, it becomes the duty of Elders to watch over their respective families; to instruct the members in their respective duties - to counsel, encourage, admonish, exhort & reprove, as occasion may require; - to lead the worship - to be examples to the members, of obedience to the principles and orders of the gospel, - so that the orders, rules & regulations pertaining to their respective families or departments are properly kept.



## Article V. Of Family Deacons & Deaconesses.

### Section 1. Their qualifications & appointment.

The office of family Deacons & Deaconesses has long been established in Church, and is essentially necessary for the care, management & direction of the domestic concerns of each family, order or branch of the Church: are required to be persons of correct & well-grounded faith in the established principles of the gospel; faithful in duty, and honest, closely united to Elders; and of suitable capacity for business. Of these qualifications the Elders by whom they are chosen & appointed, must be the judges. The number is generally two of each sex in each family, but may be more, according to the size of the family & the extent of their various duties.

### Section 2. Their duties & obligations.

The Deacons and Deaconesses of families, are intrusted with the care & oversight of the domestic concerns of their respective families. It is their duty to make proper arrangements in business — to maintain order — to watch over, counsel & direct the members in their occupations as occasion may require — to make application to office Deacons or Trustees for whatever supplies are needed in the domestic departments of the family — to maintain union, harmony and understanding with the said office Deacons; and to report to them the state of matters which fall under their cognisance and observation. But their power is restricted to the domestic concerns of their respective families or departments, and does not extend to any immediate correspondence with those without the bounds of the Church. They have no immediate concern with trade and commerce; therefore it is no business to buy and sell, nor in anywise dispose of the property under care, except with the counsel & approbation of the Trustees.

## Article VI. Privileges & Rights of Members.

### Section I. Benefits & privileges of members in Church relation

The united interest of the Church having been established by the free offerings & pious donations of the members respectively, for the objects & purposes herein stated, it cannot be considered either as a joint tenancy or a trust in common, but as a sacred treasure designed for & wholly devoted for to the pious & charitable purposes of the gospel agreeable to the constitution of the Church: Therefore it shall be possessed & enjoyed by the Church in united capacity as a sacred & covenant right. That is to say, all & every member thereof while standing in gospel union & maintaining the purity of this Covenant, shall enjoy equal benefits & privileges in the use of all the pertaining to the Church according to their several needs & circumstances: no difference shall be made on account of what any have contributed & are hereafter contribute & devote to the benefit & support of the Institution. Nevertheless provided, stipulated & agreed, That in case any one having signed the Covenant should afterwards forfeit his or her claim to membership by renouncing the principles of the Society, or by wilfully & obstinately violating the rules of which the Ministry & Elders of the Church shall be the proper & constitutional judges, then his or her claim to the said benefits, privileges & emoluments shall be equally

### Section II. Obligations of members

The subordination & obedience are the life & soul of every well regulated community, strength & protection, our happiness & prosperity, in our capacity of Church members depend on our faithful obedience to the rules & orders of the Church & to the instruction & advice of its leaders. Therefore, we do hereby Covenant & agree, that we receive & acknowledge as our Elders in the gospel, these members of the Church as or may be chosen & appointed, for the time being to that office & calling, by the agreement: and also, that we will, as faithful brethren & sisters in Christ, conform to the known & established faith & principles of our Community, & to the counsel & edification orders which shall act in union or agreement, & add to all the orders, rules & regulations that or which may be given & established in the Church, according to the principles & by the authority of

## Section 2. Duties of the Members.

The faithful improvement of our time & talents in doing good, is it do by the  
requires of man as a rational & accountable being, this duty is independent in the  
of the Church of Christ. Therefore it is a duty & requirement of all & every member  
of the Church, uniting & individualizing, to occupy & improve their time & talents to  
& in view of the interest of this Society, to promote the objects of this Government.  
Their duty to God & man, according to their several abilities & callings,  
in union with one common end; so that the wants & gifts & talents of all be  
improved for the mutual benefit of each & all concerned. And we further  
in case any member or members shall remove from one family, Society, or  
Church to another, his, her or their signature to the Town & Government, shall  
not be a claim which are incompatible with the duty of not removing  
in such manner, as if such removal had not taken place & yet are  
never, in union with the authority aforesaid, shall be entitled to all the  
benefits of the order in which they may be placed or may be placed shall conform to  
the regulations of the same.

## Article VIII. Dedication & Reliance.

### Section 1. Dedication & Consecration of persons, property & service.

According to the faith of the gospel which we have received, & agreeable to the  
practice of the Church of Christ, from its first establishment in this Society,  
namely & agree, to dedicate, devote, consecrate & give up, ourselves & services  
with all our temporal interest, to the service of God and the support  
of his Church, and to such other pious & charitable purposes as the gospel  
requires; to be under the care & direction of the proper constituted  
Church as aforesaid, according to the true intent and meaning of  
and the rules of the Church heretofore known & practiced.




















<del>Reynolds</del>	Petty Gray -	Dr. Robert Pease
David Smith	Susanah H. Pease (B)	Samuel S. Pease
<u>Benj. D. Pease</u>	Peninah H. Pease (B)	Samuel S. Pease
	Levina Pease (B)	Robert Pease -
	Josiah Dr. Dilling	John Dilling
	Sally H. Pease -	David Barnett
	Keturah D. Pease (B)	William Pease -
	Sally Pease -	John R. Pease
	John S. Pease -	John Pease
	Kennedy J. Pease	John Pease
	Fanny L. Pease -	William L. Pease
	Anna Eliza Pease (B)	Levi Pease -
	Rebecca Pease (B)	Samuel Pease -
	Sally D. Pease -	Albert L. Pease
	John M. Pease (B)	Samuel Pease

<u>Benj. D. Price</u>	Harriet Gill — —	John R. Eads
David Smith	Susannah P. Houston —	Milton M. Holt
	Lucy Shannon — —	Charles P. John
	Hannah Fickert —	W. L. L. L. L.
	Salome Davis —	Samuel M. M.
	Clarissa Rankin —	John H. H.
	Sarah Price — —	John H. H. <sup>his</sup> <sub>mark</sub>
	Polly Rankin — —	John H. H.
	Jane, Jr. H. H. H.	
	Molly H. H. — —	
	Nancy E. Moore —	
	Jenny Rankin —	
	Maria Price —	
	Polly Price —	
	Prudence H. H. —	



<u>Single</u>	Eleonor Chaset	Q
<u>Samuel Smith</u>	Wm <sup>th</sup> + John	Q
<u>Benjn D. Price</u>	Vincent + Dillon	Q
	Elyah + M <sup>th</sup> Camb	Q
	Nancy Belle	Q
	Robert Hampton	
	Maryann M'Lean	Q
	Lorange L. Harts	
	Beggy Price	Q
	Samuel Shan	
	Peggy L. Smith	Q
	Wm Pettit	
	Jane Gordon	Q
	John Monahan	
	Jane Robertson	Q
	Patience Martin	Q
	Rebecca <sup>her</sup> Rankin	Q
	Mary McQuip	Q
	Elizabeth McChesney	Q
	Anne Fisher	Q

<u>Eliza</u>	Eleanor G. Cheat	Benjamin Jones
David Smith	Polly M. Martin	David Bedd
<u>Benj. D. Price</u>	Peggy Miller	Thornstone W.
	Relena Deils	
	Martha M. Buchanan	John N. Kane
	Sally C. Campbell	Thomas Sm.
	Nancy Rankin	Ge. Parker
	Eleanor Meigs	Matthew E. Orr
	Elizabeth J. Torrey	Samuel Rich
	Mercy Tunn	Sandy Rice
	Mary Barnett	Charles Rice
	Mertha Small	
	Lucy <sup>Freeman</sup> <del>Freeman</del>	
	R. R.	

<u>Polly</u>	Mary <sup>of her husband's</sup> <sub>mark</sub> 
David <u>Smith</u>	Martha <u>Trudeau</u> 
<u>Bonje L. Rice</u>	Amelia <sup>her</sup> <sub>mark</sub> <u>Byrne</u> 
	Phetilda <u>Galloway</u> 
	Sarah <u>Gray</u> -- 
	Lucretia <u>Carroll</u> -- 
	Jane <u>Edie</u> -- -- 
	Polly <u>S. Small</u> -- 
	Polly <u>S. Polakoff</u> 
	Polly <u>W. Smith</u> -- 
	Lucy <u>Blair</u> -- 
	Jincy <u>W. Small</u> -- 
	Mary <u>Bartlett</u> 
	Edith <sup>her</sup> <sub>mark</sub> <u>Spisholm</u> -- 
	Mary <u>Chmell</u> -- 
	John <u>Hove</u>
	James <u>Sharp</u>
	Sarah <u>Wash</u>
	John <u>Trueman</u>
	Samuel <u>Smith</u>
	Obadiah <u>Smith</u>
	William <u>Hove</u>

<u>P. Temple</u>	Nelly L. <sup>her</sup> <del>X</del> <sup>mark</sup> <del>Rever</del>	Abraham Chase
David D. L. Smith	Martha Small	William <del>Small</del>
<u>Benjamin D. Price</u>	Wm. Spindle	William Small
	Elizabeth Gilman	James M. Coe
	Mary J. M. <del>Spindle</del>	
	Margaret <sup>her</sup> <del>X</del> <sup>mark</sup> <del>Spindle</del>	
	Martha Gilbert	
	Elizabeth <sup>her</sup> <del>X</del> <sup>mark</sup> <del>Drake</del>	
	Milla <sup>her</sup> <del>X</del> <sup>mark</sup> <del>Salter</del>	
	Clara <sup>her</sup> <del>X</del> <sup>mark</sup> <del>Tennant</del>	
	Lucy <sup>her</sup> <del>X</del> <sup>mark</sup> <del>Robinson</del>	

Signs Certified by

Eli M. Loan

Geo. R. R. Kine

Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> 1821.

Leah Pearce

Sarah Small

Robert P. Pearce

John M.

Signers Certified by Julia Smith Ledgerwood Joseph A. May  
Joa. Keresztes Susanah D. Smith William Knowlton  
Chas. McLean Lucinda C. McGuire William Edwards  
May 2. 1835. Elizabeth D. Parker Joseph Roberts  
Elizabeth M. Smith  
Mary Jane Smith.  
Mary McEwen  
Hester Small  
Lucy McEwen  
Margaret Pickens

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